MIRABE

AND THE

RENCH REVOLUTIO

CHARLES F. WA

CARLETON UNIVERSITY

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LOWE-MARTIN No. 1137

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Engraved by Bréa after a bust modeled from life by Desseine

MIRABEAU

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BY CHARLES F. WARWICK

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PREFACE

When I began these pages it was with the intention of preparing a course of lectures; but as the work progressed I, at last, decided to put the material gathered into book form. My original design was to trace briefly the causes of the French Revolution, and to group its principal events around Mirabeau, then Danton, and, lastly, Robespierre,—the men who were the manifestation of the Revolution in its three distinctive periods. This purpose is not wholly abandoned, for I hope to find time in the moments stolen from the duties of an exacting profession to carry out the plan as first conceived. My present purpose is to follow this book with the biographies of Danton and Robespierre.

Charles F. Warwick.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I PAGE

The French Revolution—Its Causes Remote and Immediate—The State—The Church—Henry IV.—Edict of Nantes 11

CHAPTER II

Jesuits and Jansenists—The Clergy—The People—The Nobles—The Manorial Lords—Courtiers—Game Laws—Corvées—Feudal Burdens—The Gabelle—Farmers General—Military Service—Administration of Justice—Paris 32

CHAPTER III

Louis XIV.—His Power—Etiquette—Extravagance of the Court—The Glory of the King 55

CHAPTER IV

Louis XV.—Louis XVI.—Marie Antoinette 72

CHAPTER V

The American Revolution—Benjamin Franklin—Beaumarchais 94

CHAPTER VI

Financial Condition Immediate Cause of French Revolution — Turgot — Necker—Calonne—The Notables — Lomenie de Brienne—States General Summoned—Necker Recalled 104

CONTENTS

CHAPTER VII

PAGE

Meeting of the States General—Mirabeau 115

CHAPTER VIII

Comte de Mirabeau—The Mirabeaus—Bruno—Jean Antoine—Victor 131

CHAPTER IX

Mirabeau's Birth—His Youth—School Days—Early Manhood—Marriage 149

CHAPTER X

Sophie de Monnier—Seduction of Sophie—Mirabeau in Prison at Vincennes—Letters to Sophie—Lettres de Cachet—Trial at Pontarlier—Suit at Aix 160

CHAPTER XI

Madame de Nehra—Mirabeau's Wanderings—His Extravagance — Mirabeau's Energy — His Manner of Work—His Biographers 180

CHAPTER XII

Necker and Calonne—Meeting of Necker and Mirabeau —Mirabeau Seeks Secretaryship of the Notables—Stands as Deputy of Third Estate—Campaign in Aix and Marseilles 191

CHAPTER XIII

Double Representation for Third Estate—Mirabeau Decides to Stand for Aix—Paris 203

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XIV

PAGE

States General in Session—The King's Speech—The Orders—Attempted Suppression of Mirabeau's Paper—Mirabeau's First Triumph—Commons Steadfast—Robespierre 212

CHAPTER XV

Death of the Dauphin—Third Estate Calls on Nobles and Clergy to Submit to Common Verification—Name of Convention—Spirited Debate—Siéyès—Oath of the Tennis Court—Royal Sitting—Assembly Refuses to Adjourn—Mirabeau Defies the Order of the King .. 235

CHAPTER XVI

Dismissal of Necker — Breteuil Named Minister — Camille Desmoulins—Fall of the Bastile—Versailles—Louis Visits the Assembly—Louis goes to Paris—Desertion and Emigration of the Nobles—Talleyrand 259

CHAPTER XVII

Necker Recalled—His Return a Triumph—Amnesty—Mirabeau Excuses Violence of the Mob—The Constitution—Declaration of Rights—Abolition of Privileges—August the Fourth 280

CHAPTER XVIII

Progress of the Revolution—Mirabeau's Part in the Events—Maury—Cazalès—Assembly's Address to the People—Address to the King 290

CHAPTER XIX

Necker Proposes Income Tax of Twenty-five Per Cent.—Mirabeau Supports Necker—Mirabeau Seeks Popularity in the Districts—His Ambition to be a Minister 301

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XX

PAGE

Banquet of the Guards—Fifth and Sixth of October—Royal Family go to Paris—They Occupy the Tuileries—The Assembly Follows the King to Paris—The Duke of Orleans 311

CHAPTER XXI

Murder of François the Baker—Mirabeau Intrigues for a Portfolio—Motion of Petion—Mirabeau's Speech against the Amendment Proposed by Blin—Mirabeau's Negotiations with the Court—Mirabeau Pensioned—His Interview with the Queen 328

CHAPTER XXII

Mirabeau Makes Overtures to Necker and La Fayette—Mirabeau and the Court—Mirabeau's Manner of Living—Was Mirabeau Venal?—The King and the Revolution 345

CHAPTER XXIII

Marquis de Favras—Confiscation of Church Property—Assignats 361

CHAPTER XXIV

Court Party Endeavors to Secure New Elections in the Districts—Festival of the Federation—Massacre at Nancy 372

CHAPTER XXV

Necker Resigns—Rabaut St. Etienne's Motion—Mirabeau Elected President of the National Assembly—His Address to the Quakers—Emigration of the King's Aunts—Mirabeau at the Club of the Jacobins 391

CHAPTER XXVI

Mirabeau's Closing Days—His Death—His Funeral—Was He Poisoned? 410

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XXVII

PAGE

Mirabeau Compared with his Colleagues—Orator—Author—Statesman—Politician—Religious Views—Slave Trade 422

CHAPTER XXVIII

Mirabeau's Vices and Virtues—Manner of Dress—His Extravagance—His Vanity—Could He have Saved the Monarchy?—Conclusion 453

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

MIRABEAU. Engraved by Bréa after a bust modeled from life by Desseine.....*Frontispiece*

HENRY IV. From an engraving in the collection of William J. Latta, Esq., of Philadelphia..... 28

LOUIS XIV. From an old engraving..... 60

LOUIS XV. After a painting by L. M. Vanloo..... 74

BEAUMARCHAIS. From an engraving in the collection of William J. Latta, Esq..... 100

TURGOT. From an engraving in the collection of William J. Latta, Esq..... 106

MADAME DE STAËL. From an engraving in the collection of William J. Latta, Esq..... 122

MARQUIS DE MIRABEAU. After a painting by Thérèse Boucher (1781)..... 144

THE BAILLI DE MIRABEAU. After a painting by Aved (1748)..... 154

SOPHIE DE MONNIER. After a painting attributed to Heinsius. Drawn by John R. Neill..... 160

MADAME DE NEHRA. From an old print..... 180

MIRABEAU DEFYING THE ORDER OF THE KING. Drawn by John R. Neill..... 252

TALLEYRAND. From an engraving in the collection of William J. Latta, Esq..... 278

MIRABEAU IN THE TRIBUNE. From an engraving in the collection of William J. Latta, Esq. After a painting by Delaroche..... 292

JEAN BAPTISTE CLOOTZ. From an engraving by Bonneville..... 378

FAC-SIMILE OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY MIRABEAU. The original is in the possession of William J. Latta, Esq... 438

MIRABEAU

AND

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION—ITS CAUSES REMOTE AND IMMEDIATE—THE STATE—THE CHURCH—HENRY IV.—EDICT OF NANTES

The most interesting and fascinating period in the history of modern times is that in France extending from the reign of Louis XIV. to the battle of Waterloo. In fact, there are but few, if any, epochs in the world's history in which more useful lessons are taught to the philosopher, the statesman, and the student of human nature. The contrasts are strongly marked. There is offered for our study and contemplation every phase of life from the highest to the lowest stratum of society. We witness the dazzling splendor of a corrupt court, the suffering and the degradation of an oppressed people, a Revolution without a parallel in the history of man, followed by a succession of the most glorious military victories the world has ever seen.

The period began with the reign of a proud, pompous, and voluptuous prince, the lineal succes-

sor of a long line of kings, who claimed to rule by divine right, and ended in an imperialism established by an audacious usurper, who was socially a plebeian, by birth a foreigner, and so far as royal hereditary blood was concerned, had not a drop of it in his veins.

Into this period are crowded events and incidents of the most exciting and instructive character. We have absolutism in its most pronounced form, leading to anarchy of the most radical type, the one as lawless as the other; the overturning of the monarchy was but a change from misrule to no rule.

The brilliant and corrupt court, with its stilted etiquette and formal ceremony, was expensive, luxurious, and useless; the people, taxed to maintain this display and waste, were hungry, almost naked, and impoverished.

The injustice, the tyranny, the accumulated wrongs and miseries of centuries produced a Revolution that was one of the most violent upheavals recorded in the history of governments among men. When it broke upon the nation it was like opening the dykes of an angry flood that, escaping from its confinement, carried everything before it to destruction. Feudalism, Bourbonism, the church, dynasties, king, queen, princes of the blood, nobles, laws, customs, traditions, prerogatives, privileges, pensions, exemptions, were swept away to ruin upon its raging torrent.

It was only in France that so terrific a convulsion could have taken place. It was distinctively a revolution of an impulsive, emotional people that had suffered long under tyranny, vassalage, and

serfdom. It was of gradual growth, but as inevitable as fate. Under the melancholy conditions that existed it was imperative; delay only increased and aggravated the causes and strengthened the argument and reasons for its necessity. The indifference, extravagance, insolence, and inhumanity of the nobles had created the conditions that provoked this unrestrained violence.

The mob came from their faubourgs like a swarm of naked demons vomited out of the mouth of hell, "vagabonds, ragged fellows,—many almost naked with appalling faces, beings one does not remember to have seen by daylight,—a frightful physiognomy, a hideous attire."

There is no sight more terrifying than an excited and enraged mob in motion; its raucous voice, the anger depicted in its aspect, its power for destruction, the very uncertainty of its action, which creates the additional dread of suspense, strike terror into the heart of the bravest. The individual faces may not be repulsive nor forbidding, but in a mass they assume a different aspect, and every head seems to be that of a Gorgon.

The government was in the streets; the women of the market were the prime ministers; the creators and censors of public opinion were the rabble. It was a wild orgy of hate, a revelry of crime. Religion and authority were defied and overthrown. Atheism set up the god of self, undermined religious faith, which is the strongest foundation of society, and made the mistake of judging the virtue of the church by the vice of the prelate.

The lamp-post and, later, the guillotine, became

the altars upon which were immolated the victims of anarchy. The mob actually delighted in the shedding of human blood, it developed the instinct of the cannibal, its appetite grew by what it fed on, and after slaughtering its enemies it turned like a Saturn to devour its own children.

It exulted over the cruel and cowardly murder of the Princess Lamballe, and, in fiendish demoniacal glee, combed the locks and washed the face of the gory head and triumphantly carried it on a pike, to shake it before the windows of the Temple, where was imprisoned the fallen and humiliated queen.

It shouted with delight when the king, Marie Antoinette, and the lovely Princess Elizabeth went to execution.

It covered with flowers the dying Mirabeau, followed him with tears in solemn and respectful procession to the Pantheon, and then afterwards, in hate, exhumed his body and scattered his ashes to the four winds of heaven. Inconstant in its loyalty, like all mobs, fickle, variable as the wind, it sacrificed its idols one after the other in this deluge of blood. It followed, with shouts of derision, the tumbril that carried the Duke of Orleans to the scaffold. It yelled itself hoarse with joy when the Girondists, the hope of the Revolution, mounted the guillotine. It had no pity for poor Camille Desmoulins, who had so often charmed it with his eloquence. It applauded when the monster, Hébert, the mighty titanic Danton, and, at last, the "incorruptible" Robespierre, paid the penalty of relying on its support and trust-

ing to its whimsical loyalty. Unreasonable, impressionable, impulsive, a word aptly spoken could turn it from its purpose, or send it on a new errand of crime. Its idol of to-day became the victim of its wrath to-morrow.

The temper of the mob was fiendish when the opportunity came for revenge. Could anything else have been expected? The fault lay at the door of the rich, powerful, and privileged classes; the people were not to blame, they were not responsible for the existing conditions, nor had they created the causes that induced the Revolution. The nobles had laughed at their distresses, sneered at their complaints, scoffed at their petitions, and forced them to submit to their cruel exactions. When in the days of famine the starving peasants cried for bread they were told to eat grass, and yet it was upon the money wrung by taxation from these poor creatures that the nobles were enabled to live their lives of pleasure and debauchery. They scorned, humiliated, and tortured the poor; they seemed to take special delight in venting their spite upon the victims of their injustice. The young nobles, in their wild escapades, were, at times, wanton and ingenious in their cruelty. They set at defiance every law of God and man and committed acts so atrocious, so inhuman in their character, that they cannot be described without offending decency. They inflicted torture upon their victims—men and women—in mere sport; they were controlled by a lustful, fiendish disposition that outraged every sentiment of humanity. The fury of the wild and savage pikemen

in the days of "The Red Terror" may, in a measure, be excused when we recall the deeds of these unworthy scions of ancient and distinguished names. The bleeding heads of the aristocrats on the pikes of the sans-culottes were but the revenge of the agonized and bleeding hearts of the long-suffering poor.

When we study the events that preceded the Revolution we marvel that it so long delayed its coming. Even Rome made some reparation for her spoliation and tyranny by amusing her people with the games of the circus, by providing them with the luxury of public baths, and by feeding them with bread paid for out of the public treasury; but France taxed, robbed, and starved her poor to furnish amusement, pomp, and splendor to her frivolous and luxurious court.

To trace the causes of the French Revolution necessitates a study of the history of France from the beginning of the feudal system as well as a careful study of the qualities, the characteristics, the laws, the moral, social, political, physical, and racial features of the French.

After the fall of the Roman Empire the Gauls, who had been in possession of France, were conquered by the Franks under Clovis, and the latter laid the foundations of the French monarchy and established the most severe and rigorous system of feudalism known throughout Europe. The Franks exacted from the conquered people all the dues of feudal superiors, and built up a system of separate states that took centuries to weld into one realm.

Democracy in France was of much later growth than in Switzerland and the Netherlands. While Italy was dotted with free cities and republics, while popular rights were being secured and constitutional liberty was being fostered, the feudalism of France was crushing the people under the rule of king and lords.

The friction between the crown and its vassals was constant and irritating. A combination of a few powerful barons would often interfere with the purposes of an ambitious king and in many ways curtail his power and influence. Allegiance to the crown sat lightly upon these haughty lords, who were absolute in their own manors or domains and brooked no insolence from any superior, in fact, often defying in open rebellion even the king himself. In times of foreign invasion they had frequently to be won over to the aid of the crown, and at such times, in consideration of their services, exacted concessions that strengthened their power and independence.

France was a great kingdom of many little kingdoms, and the struggle was a long and bitter one to consolidate and cement these separate and distinct parts into one whole and to centralize the supreme authority in one head, the monarch.

The civil wars of the Fronde helped to break the independence of the barons and, at last, under the vigorous administration of Richelieu, the crown was made absolute. "In a word," says Mignet, "power had become more and more concentrated, and as it had passed from the many to the few, it

came, at last, from the few to be invested in one alone."

No longer did the king have to depend upon the feudal lords for his army, for now he had means to support his own and was able to wage war against a foreign enemy or compel obedience from a rebellious vassal.

The church was another enemy to the absolutism of the crown, it was an "imperium in imperio," and its first allegiance was due to Rome. Its power was not confined within the limits of any state, it was world wide. It was ever jealous of its rights, and always ready to resent any attempt made by the state to encroach upon its jurisdiction. It had built up a system that was based upon divine creation and authority. Its wealth, its vast possessions and privileges, its influence over the minds and consciences of men gave it an immense power in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. It had no standing army, but it had, instead, that terrible weapon of excommunication that made the most defiant monarch tremble and do penance. When it fulmined its decree from Rome, the king who defied its authority became an outcast, a social pariah; he was shorn of his power and his people absolved from their allegiance.

The organization of the Roman Church commands the admiration of the world. It is one of the greatest creations ever conceived and devised by the wit and intellect of man. The church is an army waging a persistent and relentless warfare in the cause of religion. Its campaign lasts not for a season, but for all time. The army never sleeps,

never camps over night; it is ever on the march, following the standard of the cross beyond the seas, over the deserts, into benighted regions, combating heresy and converting the heathen. It brooks no opposition within its fold, it deals summarily with the rebellious. It commands obedience to its teachings, implicit faith in its doctrines, and promises to the faithful eternal life. Its only purpose is to proselyte the world and to enlarge the scope of its influence and power.

It is one great empire. Its domain is the universe, its capital is Rome, its subjects owe an allegiance to one head; they speak every known tongue, but have only one creed, one law. Its policies are catholic; its influence and purposes are eternal. It brings to its service the prince and the beggar; it is democratic in its methods of salvation, imperialistic in its organization and power.

Its altars are found in every clime, in every zone. Its domain extends into those far remote lands whose shores are washed by the waters of the polar seas. It reaches from the east coast of America to the furthermost island in Polynesia, from the west coast of Africa to New Guinea, from Patagonia to Greenland, from Kamtchatka to Tasmania. Its followers are found in the lands of Confucius, Buddha, and Mahomet; everywhere in the known world its cross glitters and its doctrines are taught. It has lasted for centuries, at times shaken by schism, heresy, and dissension, but through all its perils and vicissitudes it has retained its entity, its faith, and its integrity, and will

exist until the world dissolves, until the last second of recorded time.

A struggle for supremacy with so mighty a power as this required all the intelligence, courage, and force the state could bring to bear.

The contest in France continued uninterruptedly for centuries; it was long and bitter and was waged with all the arts and methods of intrigue and subtle diplomacy known to crafty churchmen and resourceful politicians, but gradually the state gained the ascendancy, and the pope in the reign of Francis I. granted to the crown the power of nomination to ecclesiastical dignities.

There was at no time a struggle for mastery between the king and a stubborn churchman, such as that witnessed in England in the days of Henry II. and Thomas a'Becket, nor did a French king ever have to go to Canossa as the result of a conflict with the pope. The French clergy did not produce such a character as Becket, nor did a French king provoke so savagely the wrath of Rome as did Henry IV., of Germany.

The encroachment, however, upon the power of the church was gradual but sure; her wealth was not diminished, nor were her estates confiscated, nor her privileges and exemption from taxation abolished, but she was deprived of her temporal power, and her right of appointment to ecclesiastical offices was greatly curtailed.

This long conflict between the state and the church, however, had not estranged the loyalty of the people from the latter. No people were ever more devoted or more closely wedded to their re-

ligious faith than the French, and yet no nation was ever so overwhelmed, at last, by irreligion and infidelity.

It is in France that the first example is offered of the inclination of the Roman Church to use methods of extreme violence against dissenters. The Albigenses, in the south of France, were reformers who separated from the communion of Rome in the thirteenth century. A crusade was preached against them by Pope Innocent III., and an army of half a million men, under the leadership of Simon de Montfort, the Earl of Leicester, invaded the rebellious territory and, after many years of bitter and persistent warfare, eradicated the heresy until not a vestige of it was left. The land was swept as by a fire.

It was during this period that the tribunal of the Inquisition was first set up,—about the year 1210, —and began that cruel system of coercion by torture that endeavored to control the faith and the reason of men. Spinoza, philosophizing on this subject, says: "Men are so made as to resent nothing more impatiently than to be treated as criminal on account of opinions which they deem true, and charged as guilty for simply what wakes their affection to God and men. Hence, laws about opinions are aimed not at the base, but at the noble, and tend not to restrain the evil-minded, but rather to irritate the good, and cannot be enforced without great peril to the government. . . . What evil can be imagined greater for a state than that honorable men, because they have thoughts of their own and cannot act a lie, are sent as culprits

into exile! What more baneful than that men, for no guilt or wrong-doing, but for the generous largeness of their mind, should be taken for enemies and led off to death, and that the torture bed, the terror of the bad, should become, to the signal shame of authority, the finest stage for the public spectacle of endurance and virtue!"

Does it not seem strange, in the light of the present civilization, that it was ever considered possible to change an opinion of the mind by the torture of the body? Is a recantation of a belief to be depended upon if made under such circumstances? Did the opinion of Galileo undergo a change because he was threatened with the rack? No more than did the earth stop its motion.

But intolerance was the spirit of the age; men's minds had not been enlightened, they were blinded by bigotry and superstition—the twin daughters of ignorance. The church but reflected the thought of the times, for this system which appears so cruel and unreasonable to all of us to-day received the unqualified endorsement and support of the wisest and best men among the laity as well as the clergy.

The judges who sat in the tribunal of the Inquisition were, to be sure, religious fanatics, but outside of this, no doubt, they were devout, honest, God-fearing and exemplary in their lives. They were not naturally cruel, they would not have tortured anything except a heretic. They were simply influenced and dominated by that spirit of religious intolerance that blinds men to the truth and has, in every age, halted the world in its progress.

It is hard to believe that any act could be more

intolerant in its character than that known as the edict of 1550 against heretics, enacted at the instance of Philip II. Under its provisions no citizen was allowed "to print, copy, keep, conceal, sell, buy, or give any book or writing made by Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, or any other heretic, nor break or injure the images of the Virgin or the Saints, nor to hold or attend any meeting where heretics teach." The punishment prescribed for its violation was death by sword, by fire, or by burial alive. A like punishment was provided for those who would dare to lodge, shelter, entertain, nurse, feed, or clothe a suspected heretic. Even failure to betray a heretic, though he were a friend, was punished by death.

Intolerance and bigotry were not confined to one sect nor to one state. They controlled all classes of Christians, and, unfortunately, their spirit has not entirely disappeared even in this age of boasted civilization and enlightenment.

In the reign of Elizabeth of England, in retaliation of the bull of Pope Pius V., a law was passed which provided that if any Catholic shall convert a Protestant to the Romish church they shall both suffer death for high treason; and this was not an exceptional act, it was characteristic of the cruel bigotry of the times. There were hundreds like it, but this is cited simply to give an idea of the intolerance that prevailed throughout all Christendom.

The act was carefully considered, passed Parliament, received the sanction of the queen and the approval of the people. The Anglican and the

Calvinist were just as intolerant as the Romanist. After Calvin had escaped martyrdom at Paris he returned to Geneva to send Servetus to the stake.

The world had not reached the point where the church and the state were willing to concede to the people the right to enjoy religious and political liberty. Perhaps, too, the times and the conditions were not ripe for these blessings. It was not an age when anyone could, with impunity, have uttered the truth that "for their religious opinions men are responsible to God alone." It took centuries of tears and blood and strife, in the efforts that were made, to reconcile the world to the acceptance of this great truth, and after all this sacrifice, even to-day, in many lands, the light has not yet penetrated the darkness.

The stake, the rack, and the thumbscrew were used to control the consciences of men. Religious sectarian contention plunged nations into wars that were cruelly and relentlessly waged in the name of the gentle teacher of Nazareth, who taught men to love one another.

It was an age when men believed in coercion rather than persuasion, force rather than argument. Freedom of inquiry was out of the question. What right had the people to think for themselves? The civic duty of the citizen was to submit patiently and willingly to the tyranny and absolutism of the crown and his religious duty to accept without question the dogmas of the church.

The advocate Barbier, in the eighteenth century, shows the subservient disposition of that age when he writes: "I believe that one has to fulfil his

duties honorably without concerning one's self with state affairs in which one has no mission and exercises no power." On the other hand, it was the duty of the faithful to accept the doctrines of the church with implicit belief. To question, was to doubt; to doubt, was to sin, and there was no sin blacker nor more deadly than heresy.

It was believed and argued that so important was the matter of faith in the scheme of the salvation of men's souls, that no method was too severe that would save the people from heresy and its dire and dreadful consequences. To be sure, the spirit of religious intolerance has been modified by time, but until it entirely disappears the difference between the past ages and our own, in this matter of intolerance, is after all only one of degree.

Men can argue upon almost any question without acrimony except that of religion. Contention between political parties has never been so violent, so rancorous as that between Christian sects. Religious belief is considered the most vital and important question that relates to man's welfare here and hereafter, and yet, strange to say, nothing so arouses the anger and the passions of the human heart, and creates a hatred so bitter and so relentless as religious differences. They separate parent from child, husband from wife, brother from sister, lover from maid. So sensitive are men on the subject of their religion that the slightest reflection on their faith arouses all the opposition in their souls.

There is no question that should be more moderately discussed without bias or prejudice in order

that the truth may be ascertained and the merits of both sides understood, and yet it seems to be the one question that cannot be debated fairly by ardent partisans. They misjudge each other, quarrel over mere terms, differ on non-essentials, and in many instances end the controversy in violent language and a broken friendship. "If men would once consider one another reasonably, they would either reconcile their differences, or maintain them more amicably," is the wise saying of William Penn. Even conservative and reasonable men seem to lose their usual good judgment in religious discussion.

The bitter and bloody struggles, the hate engendered by the intolerance and the persecutions of the past, seem to have left wounds that still rankle and fester in the soul, but the broadening spirit and the refining influences of education and general enlightenment will, in time, heal the wounds until there will be left not even the vestige of a scar.

After all, in the vast majority of instances, religious belief is a matter that depends on birth, early associations, and education. The intolerant bigot of one sect would be just as intolerant if he had been born and bred under other conditions or in the fold of another creed. Men inherit their religion as they do their racial features and characteristics.

Some men show their loyalty to their church by being bigoted and intolerant in their support of its doctrines. They think they prove their fidelity by an unadulterated prejudice. Even men whose conduct of life is in direct contradiction to the

teachings and the tenets of their church, show a bitter hostility to any and all opposition to their religion, whose creed they do not understand and whose precepts they habitually disobey. They, no doubt, display an ardent loyalty to their faith, in the hope of receiving the favor of the church, which they really so little merit.

The Reformation had awakened thought throughout Europe, but the Roman church determinedly opposed free inquiry and exerted its power to prevent the spread of the new doctrines. But for the efforts of Philip II. of Spain and Ignatius Loyola the Reformation would have made much greater headway. To Louis XIV. must be given the credit of staying its progress in France.

The Edict of Nantes was an epoch-making event in the reign of a liberal prince. It guaranteed to every Christian worshipper the unfettered exercise of his religion.

Henry IV. was a born leader, a man of action and ambition. In council he was wise and judicious, as a statesman he was able, and as a politician, tactful, diplomatic, and unscrupulous. A braver soldier never led an army to battle; he had those qualities of heart and mind that inspired confidence and courage in his followers. "If you lose sight of your ensigns, rally around my plume; you will always find it on the high road to honor" were the eloquent words he addressed to his troops at Ivry. With so brave a leader, victory is half won before the battle begins.

He was liberal and tolerant in his views and the only popular king in the Bourbon line. He

earnestly desired to promote the public welfare. His wish that every peasant might have a fowl in his pot on Sunday was a new sentiment in the heart of a French king and endeared him to the people. His reign was the only rift in the dark clouds of Bourbonism, that for more than two centuries overshadowed France.

He was without strong religious convictions, and he easily abjured his creed when it stood between him and the throne, jauntily remarking that "the crown was worth a mass."

He had one great quality that was sadly lacking in the kings of France, and that was a tolerant spirit. He was not a bigot, and his edict of toleration was a blessing to his country.

Louis XIV. subdued the nobility and the church, restrained Parliament, and made them all dependent upon his royal will. He quelled opposition whenever and in whatever form it manifested itself, and revoked the Edict of Nantes because it allowed a religious freedom not in consonance with his royal desire. Its revocation was both a crime and a blunder. It revived the old spirit of intolerance and persecution. It was turning back the hands of the clock; it was out of time, out of step with the advancing and expanding thought of the day.

An illiberal and unjust act done in the name of religion must in due season cause a reaction and weaken the influence of the church. This may not happen at the moment when bigotry inflames and brutalizes the minds of men, but if time be given for reflection, reason will show the error and point the injustice.

HENRY IV

From an engraving in the collection of William J. Latta, Esq.

The Edict of Nantes was for the protection of the Huguenots and to call home from exile the descendants of those who had fled from the horrors of the massacre of the St. Bartholomew. Its revocation revived intolerance and persecution and assured the dominancy of one creed, one church.

In France the Huguenots were among the most industrious, prosperous, and enlightened of all the king's subjects. They were devoutly religious, were loyal to government, peace-loving, and tolerant of the opinions of others.

The massacre of these useful citizens on St. Bartholomew's Eve was a crime of the most heinous character; it shocked all Europe and made a deep impression upon the thought of the age. "No example of equal barbarity," says De Thou, "is to be found in all antiquity or in the annals of the world." It was so wicked in its conception, so unjust in its purpose, and so cruel in its execution that, in time, it created a sympathy for its victims, estranged the minds of men from the faith of their fathers, and begat an opposition not only to the church, but to the principles of Christianity. It no doubt, to a considerable degree, aided in the development and advancement of the infidelity that subsequently swept over France, destroying nearly every trace of the old faith, until, at last, in the noble Cathedral of Notre Dame, the altars of Christ were overturned, the worship of the living God dispensed with, and the Goddess of Reason set up in the person of a beautiful harlot.

The persecution entirely failed of its purpose; instead of strengthening the church in France, it

arrayed thoughtful men against its methods, it aroused discussion, criticism, and denunciation, and men, failing to distinguish the true faith from the acts of its disciples, lost confidence in religion and embraced a cold and heartless infidelity. The persecution, instead of making men good Christians, made them bigots, hypocrites, or infidels.

The loss to France, by the exile of these useful citizens, the Huguenots, was irreparable; many of them were the flower of their race and they were scattered by a brutal bigotry to the four corners of the earth, carrying with them, however, all their skill and talents to enrich the peoples among whom they settled. In the language of Voltaire, "the French were as widely dispersed as the Jews." The massacre resulted not only in depriving France of many of her best citizens, but left in the mind and heart of the nation the memory of a great wrong done in the name of religion. Men were breaking away from the restraints of the church and were beginning, without bigotry, to criticise and denounce injustice wherever and by whomever practised.

In the National Assembly, during the Revolution, the frequent references made by the orators in their debates to the massacre of the St. Bartholomew show how the injustice and the cruelty of that dire event had impressed the minds of men and had lessened their reverence for the church. "It was at that time," says Victor Hugo, "an oratorical custom to interject into every discourse some imprecation, or other, on the massacre of the Saint Bartholomew." Vergniaud, in one of his

wild flights, saw "spectres of the Medici gliding along the corridors of the Tuileries preparing another St. Bartholomew of patriots."

Upon one occasion, in the Constituent Assembly, a resolution was offered by a representative of the clergy, declaring "the Catholic religion is and shall ever be the religion of the nation and its worship the only one authorized." One of the deputies of the *Noblesse*, in an argument supporting this intolerant measure, referred to a decree in point that had received the sanction of Louis XIV. In an instant, Mirabeau was on his feet and denounced the measure as unjust and illiberal. "And how should not every act of intolerance," he thundered, "have been consecrated in a reign signalized by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes? Do you appeal to history? Forget not that from this very tribune I behold the window whence a king of France, armed against his people by a hateful faction, which disguised personal interest under the cloak of religion, fired his musket and gave the signal for the massacre of the St. Bartholomew!" The hall resounded with cheers and applause and the intolerant resolution was voted down. A few days later, Roederer, a deputy who must have had a Scotch strain in his make up, solemnly stated that having carefully examined into the matter, he was prepared to prove that the window alluded to by Mirabeau could not be seen from the tribune. Mirabeau bent his head to the blow and gravely replied: "I suspect that you are half right, but at the time I was speaking, I certainly saw it."

CHAPTER II

JESUITS AND JANSENISTS—THE CLERGY—THE PEOPLE—THE NOBLES—THE MANORIAL LORDS—COURTIERS—GAME LAWS—CORVÉES—FEUDAL BURDENS—THE GABELLE—FARMERS GENERAL—MILITARY SERVICE—ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE—PARIS

The controversy between the Jesuits and the Jansenists was an important event in the history of the emancipation of the minds of men from the severe and uncompromising rule of mere doctrine. All France was inflamed by the angry discussion. Bulls and denunciations thundered from the Vatican, but they only surcharged the already heated air and increased the bitterness of the contention. Both sides struggled to gain the favor of the court, but at last the Jansenists were proscribed by the king, and their cloister at Port Royal was levelled to the ground. The influence of their liberalism, however, spread in every direction and planted the seeds of revolution. It was the working of the democratic leaven in the church, and "the embers," says Taine, "smouldering in the ashes are to be of use in 1791 when the ecclesiastical edifice comes to be attacked."—in those dreadful days when the mob having lost all respect for the church, all reverence for sacred things, will cry out in its wild rage: "Tous les éveques, a la lanterne."

When the court decided upon the destruction of

Jansenism, it revealed the spirit of the old order, and the cruel act resulted in further strengthening the sentiment of toleration among the people.

"The good city of Paris," wrote Barbier in 1733, "is Jansenist from top to bottom . . . the mass of the Parisians,—men, women, and children, —all upholding that doctrine, without comprehending it or understanding any of its distinctions and interpretations, out of hatred to Rome and the Jesuits. Women, the silliest, and even chambermaids would be hacked to pieces for it."

Little did they understand the nice theological distinctions that were drawn in relation to the delicate subject of the grace of God and man's salvation thereby. The questions in controversy were too subtle and abstruse for the common mind to comprehend, but the people were beginning to oppose injustice and persecution in every form, and, irrespective of the questions involved, they saw only a great power arbitrarily exercised in the suppression of free inquiry. The church of Rome had lost much of her influence because of her determination, at all hazards, to stifle freedom of thought; and yet she claimed to be honest in her purpose for she contended that in her keeping alone were the means of salvation, and she deemed it to the ultimate advantage of man that he should not err in a matter so important as his religious faith. Her reasoning in this matter did not differ from that of other sects at that time, for, unfortunately, they were nearly all intolerant. Her methods of coercion were more drastic and her persecutions more severe than those of other sects, and

she put forth every effort to prevent the spread of heresy, and the withdrawal of dissenters from her fold. Her life, her integrity were in peril and she resorted to unjust and cruel methods to save her existence. It was a period of religious fanaticism, strife, and persecution. The spirit of bigotry and intolerance controlled the minds and the conduct of men; it was born not of Christ, but of the devil.

The history of Christianity is written in blood. It is a story of contention, schism, intolerance, hate, war, persecution, and massacre. The founder of Christianity proclaimed the gospel of peace. His disciples forgot the example and the teachings of their Master, and for centuries the world was plunged into despair and groped its way through darkness. There was too much religion and not enough Christianity; too much dogma and not enough humanity; too much man and not enough Christ.

Another reason for the declining influence of the church, in France, was the conduct and the manner of living of many of the higher clergy, who, following the example of the court, indulged in extravagance and luxury at the expense of the poor. The lives of some of the princes of the church reflected on the cause they represented, and their conduct became so scandalous as to bring reproach upon religion itself, for the world will measure the truth of the church by the acts of its teachers. The infamous Dubois and the yet more infamous Rohan were not the only examples of profligate churchmen.

The church became as rapacious as the state, and exacted every sou due under its seignorial rights. The two classes, the nobility and the upper clergy, selfishly and unjustly appropriated to themselves all the advantages of society. "These enemies of the happiness of the poor," writes the Breton philosopher, "pay nothing to the state; although they possess the greatest amount of goods and wealth, all is for them, nothing for us, and with this nothing we are obliged to provide all the needs of government." But while the upper clergy were enjoying their privileges, the poor curés, "*les vrais pasteurs des âmes*," the real workers in the ministry, had hardly a subsistence. Meanly housed and poorly fed, they labored in their humble calling without encouragement and with no hope of advancement or preferment. They were the only earthly comforters to whom the poor could go; they sympathized with them in their sorrows, suffered with them in their distresses, advised with them in their troubles, and comforted them when they were sick in body and in soul. It was because of their experience and personal knowledge of the miseries of the poor, that so many of the lower clergy espoused the cause of the Revolution.

While these contests were going on between the king and the lords, between the state and the church, the condition of the people grew worse and worse, for the burdens of feudalism made their existence akin to slavery. They, in truth, differed not a whit from the slaves in America, who, in a later age, by the supreme law of the land, were declared

to have no rights which their masters were bound to respect. The nobles had all the privileges. The common people bore all the burdens, and were excluded from every chance of preferment.

Offices, mere sinecures, were created for the maintenance of the favored and privileged classes. Pensions were lavished on courtiers and mistresses. Louis XIV. squandered upon Madame de Fontanges the revenues of a province and Louis XV. spent thirty-six million francs, worth at least seventy-two million francs of the money of to-day, upon Madame de Pompadour.

Public offices were created merely to be sold. To such an extent had this abuse grown under prior reigns that Richelieu suppressed upwards of one hundred thousand of them during his ministry.

Louis XIV. in 1692 abolished all municipal elections, in order to increase the revenues of the crown by selling the right of governing the towns to those rich citizens who were willing to pay for the empty honor. These offices were sold and resold and became sources of great revenue to the state.

The holding of office was deemed to confer distinction upon the incumbent and it became the rage among the well-to-do middle classes to secure the honor by influence or purchase. The wit and the ingenuity of the government officials were severely taxed in their efforts to invent all sorts of offices to supply the public demand. Upon one occasion, the minister Demarest proposed to Louis XIV. the creation of some new ones. The king, failing to see why they should be created, asked,

"Who is it that will buy them?" The minister replied, "Your Majesty is ignorant of one of the finest prerogatives of the kings of France, which is that when a king creates an office, God at the same moment creates a fool to buy it."

The condition of the peasants was intolerable; it is almost impossible to describe it so as fully to depict the real misery that existed. Taine says, "The most part resembled the fellahs of Egypt or the laborers of Hindoostan."

La Bruyere, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, wrote: "Certain savage-looking beings, male and female, are seen in the country, black, livid, and sunburnt, and belonging to the soil. They dig and grub with invincible stubbornness,—they are, in fact, men. They live in dens and fare on black bread, water, and roots; they perish of hunger and destitution, the prey of the tax gatherer."

Massillon, in the middle of the eighteenth century, commenting on this matter, said: "The people of our country live in misery; they have neither furniture nor beds; during part of the year most of them have no food except oaten bread. The negroes of our islands are happier." The peasants ate pulse and nettles and the bark of trees. In many instances they had no beds but slept in boxes filled with straw. Ignorant and debased as they were, reduced to the most wretched condition by cruelty and tyranny, they excited, strange to say, not the pity but the contempt of the nobles, who were really responsible for their degradation. It is generally the case that those who degrade or

enslave their fellow-men look with scorn on the victims of their injustice.

When the lords lived on the manors and gave attention to the interests of their tenants, the needs and wants of the latter received some consideration; but when the crown centred in itself the glory and the splendor of the monarchy, the nobles flocked to Paris and Versailles, there to bask in the sunshine of royal favor, and they drew the substance from their manors to maintain their extravagant and luxurious mode of living at the court. The tie between the lord and the vassal was severed and all that was left of feudalism was its burdens.

Absenteeism was the curse of France as it has been a curse in more recent times in another land. No wonder the peasants when they passed the deserted chateaux clenched their fists, muttered deep oaths, vowed vengeance, and remembered the days of the Jacquerie.

Before the nobles were drawn to the court, they were identified with the social life of their neighbors and dependents; and although the feudal duties were oppressive, the people looked upon the lords as those to whom the services were justly due.

The lords kept open house and their hospitality, charity, and friendly offices endeared them to the people. They were kings in little kingdoms. They were regarded with respect and it was greatly to their interest and safety to inspire and secure the love and devotion of their tenants. Brave, manly, chivalrous and generous, they lived like princes in their provinces, but at Versailles they became mere flunkeys to the king, mere servants in attendance

upon the ceremonies and functions of the court. Men who should have given valuable service to the state lost all sense of public duty and civic responsibility. Proud of their connection with the court, they looked down with disdain upon the common people, and even upon those persons of their own class who were not so fortunate as to be favored with royal recognition.

At home, they lived as country gentlemen; at court they became mere gallants. They lost all spirit of independence in that they were beggars for royal favors and dependents on the king's bounty. They lived on pensions and for pleasure, and these were the considerations that induced them to surrender their independence,—a poor bargain, one would say, and without sufficient consideration. "In the enjoyment of plenty they soon lost the memory of freedom."

They were adepts in all the fine features of polite society. They were keen and witty and would rather be the makers of famous epigrams than useful to the state. The French language, vivacious and expressive as it is, was never more adroitly used in lively conversation and "in turning the phrases of flattery" than by those frivolous and irresponsible courtiers, who lived the lives of butterflies.

All high positions in the army and the church were secured through royal favor. The commons had no hope of preferment; even to be a captain in the army, the applicant had to prove that he had four degrees of nobility.

If revenue were needed for the government or

for the support of the throne, it was wrung from the poor. The privileged classes that ought to have borne the burden and that alone were able to bear it, were exempt by law. The prince and the bishop revelled in luxury, the peasant and the curé were ill housed and ill fed.

Game laws were cruel and oppressive. The peasant was forbidden to enclose his land, his crops were ruthlessly destroyed, and he had no adequate remedy at law to recover damages for any injury done or loss sustained. He could keep neither dog nor gun, nor in the hatching season did he dare to disturb the game by the cultivation of his soil or the reaping of his crops.

"There were numerous edicts for preserving the game which prohibited weeding and hoeing lest the young partridges should be disturbed; steeping seed, lest it should injure the game; manuring with night soil lest the flavor of the partridges should be injured by feeding on the corn so produced; mowing hay before a certain time, so late as to spoil many crops; and taking away the stubble which would deprive the birds of shelter." We should note that it was not only small game that was preserved, for the same writer further states that "by game it must be understood whole droves of wild boars and herds of deer not confined by any wall or pole, but wandering, at pleasure, over the whole country, to the destruction of crops; and to the peopling of the galleys by the wretched peasants who presumed to kill them in order to save that food which was to support their helpless children."

In the bailiwick of Evreux "the game had destroyed everything up to the very houses. The rabbits became a pest and the peasants were not allowed to pull up the weeds in summer, which injured the seed sown, lest the partridges should be interfered with." Heavy penalties were imposed for the slightest violation of these inhuman statutes. Taine says, "The game wardens protected the beasts as if they were men and hunted the men as if they were beasts."

The capitaineries were grants by the king of all the game of a certain district to the princes of the blood, even on lands which did not belong to them. This grant carried with it the right to hunt at pleasure over the ground belonging perhaps to a hundred or more different proprietors, tenants or small farmers. The right was paramount. No prior claims, manorial or otherwise, could interfere with this royal grant. It was distinct from the soil. It was simply a right of property in the game with the privilege of hunting, which right, under the English law, would be in the nature of an incorporeal hereditament. No matter how much damage the game and the hunters did to the land and the crops, the owner had no redress. It is strange the peasants themselves did not go hunting occasionally, and not after partridges nor wild boar nor deer.

The growing crops were trampled and crushed under the hoofs of the horses of the sporting barons who in the open season daily followed the chase. No interests were allowed to interfere with the amusement of the nobles. The peasant who

had the temerity to remonstrate against the trespass would have been dealt with summarily for his insolence.

There is nothing in the whole history of this vicious period that so clearly illustrates the utter disregard, the supreme indifference the nobles had for the rights of the common people, as the cruel exercise and enjoyment of these hunting privileges.

The peasant was compelled, under the *corvée* or statute labor, to do a certain amount of work annually in keeping the bridges and the public roads in repair. Arthur Young says: "These corvées, or police of the roads, were annually the ruin of many hundreds of farmers; more than three hundred were reduced to beggary in filling up one vale in Lorraine; all these oppressions fell on the *tiers état* only, the nobility and the clergy having been equally exempted from *tailles*, militia, and *corvées*."

The peasant paid excessive tolls to travel on the highways, to be ferried across the rivers. He paid dues at the fairs and markets. He paid a tax called "the dove-cote right" for the privilege of keeping pigeons. He paid fees exorbitant in amount for the transfer of land. He was compelled to grind his corn at the lord's mill, press his grapes in the lord's wine press, bake his bread in the lord's oven, and kill his cattle in the lord's slaughter-house, and woe to the poor wretch who had the temerity to grind his own corn, press his own grapes, bake his own bread, or kill his own ox.

" Feudal tyranny, armed with judicial power, has not blushed at breaking hand mills, and at selling, annually, to the miserable, the faculty of bruising between two stones a measure of buckwheat or barley."

A very curious and humiliating service imposed upon the peasants was called " *silence des grenouilles corvée a misericorde*," which, when the wife of the lord of the manor was in travail, required the people to swish or beat the waters in marshy districts to keep the frogs silent, lest my lady should be disturbed. But even this was overtopped by the horrible privilege of la Marquette, or " baiser de Mariées," which allowed the lord to borrow the peasant's fiancée the night before the nuptials.

We have not the time nor the space to enumerate the many degrading services to which the peasant was subjected. He paid tithes to the church and a multitude of local taxes, feudal dues and services of every conceivable character to the lord and to the state. He was hunted until he paid the last sou in his purse. He was often induced to resort to perjury to save his little, for if he told the truth, he ran the risk of being reduced to abject poverty. There was no encouragement given to him to improve his condition, for the first faint signs of prosperity were followed by further impositions. " The more the peasant acquires and produces," says Taine, " the heavier his burdens become."

The tax gatherer haunted him like a shadow, stood at the door of his home, followed him to church and interrupted him at his prayers. Taxes! taxes! taxes! of every kind and character were

levied upon the peasant and collected by severe and cruel processes. "The clothes of the poor are seized, their last measure of flour, even the latches on their doors." "The garret and the hut as well as the farm and the farm-house know the collector, the constable, and the bailiff; no hovel escapes the detestable brood." These blood-suckers never relaxed their efforts. If one showed any signs of sympathy for the suffering poor, he was removed, or else goaded by his rapacious and insatiable masters, under the threat of dismissal, to put forth fresh exertions. There was no avoiding the tax-gatherer, but by the way of death. The peasant paid a tribute to the state for the privilege of living; and, Oh, God! what a living!

The gabelle, or salt tax, was one of the most odious and oppressive in the whole system of vicious taxation. It varied in amount in the different provinces. It was unequally imposed and levied. Some districts were wholly exempt, while in others, it was a heavy burden. Each person, over seven years of age, had to buy seven pounds of salt a year, and this quantity he was compelled to purchase whether he wanted it or not. A neglect to comply with this law subjected the offender to the payment of a fine. This salt could be used only for cooking and for seasoning food for the table. It could not be used for curing meat and fish. If salt were needed for this purpose, an additional quantity had to be purchased and a certificate given. The inhabitants on the coast were forbidden to let their cattle drink the sea water.

The penalties and punishments for the violation

of the laws governing the purchase and use of this indispensable article were fines. imprisonments, flogging, the galleys, and death. An army of officials were employed to see that the salt was used for the purposes for which it was bought and to arrest smugglers or those persons who sold it without authority. The agents had the right to enter the houses of even the privileged orders to make inspections.

"Calonne," says Von Holst, "two years before the Revolution, reported that because of the violation of the laws relating to the gabelle, there had been four thousand seizures, three thousand four hundred imprisonments, five hundred sentences to whipping, exiles, and the galleys, annually." The Farmers General, those vampires that purchased from the government the exclusive right of collecting the taxes, were merciless in the prosecution of those persons who attempted to avoid payment.

Smuggling that reduced the returns was punished to the full extent of the law, and the sentences imposed in many instances on women and children, as well as on men, were inhuman and entirely out of proportion to the offence.

In Dauphiné, smugglers of salt, for the second offence, were sent to the galleys for life. Smugglers armed, who assembled in number under five, for the second offence, were punished by death. Soldiers with arms, smuggling salt, were hanged; without arms, were sent to the galleys for life.

Women smugglers, married and single, for first and second offences, were fined; for third offence, were flogged and banished from the kingdom for

life. Husbands were responsible for their wives, and if they made default in payment of the fines, were flogged. Children smugglers were punished the same as the women. Fathers and mothers were responsible for their children, and, failing to pay the fines, were flogged.

This will give some idea of how far tyranny can go. The cruel and inhuman punishments were inflicted for the commission of offences that were nothing more than misdemeanors. These atrocious laws were passed only for the purpose of enriching the sordid and rapacious Farmers General. Could a more inhuman system of taxation and criminal procedure be conceived?

"Tax gathering was nothing but an organized warfare. It caused an army of two hundred thousand drones to oppress the soil. Those locusts devoured—wasted—everything. To drain substance out of a people thus devoured it was necessary to have cruel laws, terrible penalties—the galleys, gibbets, racks."

If the peasant succeeded in avoiding the tax gatherer, the recruiting officer pressed him into military service, dragged him from his friends, home, and family to serve a state that was not worth serving nor saving.

The noble officers were proud, insolent, and cruel. They looked upon the common soldiers as hardly human beings. The former lived in comfortable quarters, the latter were half-fed, badly lodged and ill-treated. The military service was so odious to the peasants that they often fled into the woods, where they were hunted like wild beasts

until they were captured and impressed into the army.

There was no remedy by process of law that gave relief to poor suitors. "The administration of justice," says Arthur Young, "was partial, venal, infamous. They speak of the dispensation of justice in the manorial courts as comprising every species of despotism, appeals endless, augmenting litigation, favoring every species of chicane, ruining the parties, not only by enormous expenses but by a dreadful loss of time. The judges, commonly ignorant pretenders, hold their courts in cabarets, and are absolutely dependent on the seigneurs." And again he says: "Upon the question of expecting justice to be really and fairly administered, every one confessed there was no such thing to be looked for. The conduct of the parliaments was profligate and atrocious. Upon almost every cause that came before them, interest was openly made with the judges, and woe betided the man, who, with a cause to support, had no means of conciliating favor, either by the beauty of a handsome wife or by other methods."

No government in the history of the world was ever more oppressive and corrupt than that of France. No people ever bore heavier burdens and received so little in return. The exactions were cruel, heartless, and rapacious; the people had but few rights and the state acted as if she owed them no duty. If she did owe a duty, she surely never paid it.

There seemed to be no reciprocal relations between the state and the peasants. The latter were

mere beasts of burden whose toil and labor maintained the pomp and splendor of the throne, the luxury and debauchery of the court. So hard and severe was the lot of the peasants that many of them abandoned their miserable farms and took refuge in Paris and the provincial towns, where they lived lives of vagabondage, and, in time, helped to compose the mobs that directed the course of the Revolution.

"Under the *ancien régime*," says Von Holst, in his most interesting lectures on the French Revolution, "the immigrant proletariat from the country was by the law barred out from all ways of earning a livelihood, except as common day laborers, and the wages of these were, in 1788, on an average twenty-six cents for men and fifteen for women, while the price of bread was higher than in our times." He further says that "in 1791, long before the inauguration of the Reign of Terror, there were in Paris, in a population of six hundred and fifty thousand, one hundred and eighteen thousand paupers."

As early as March, 1790, Bailly, at that time Mayor of Paris, told the National Assembly that "for six months the people of Paris have lived only on alms."

There was no middle agricultural class such as was growing in England and adding strength and stability to the state. The distinguishing difference between the governments of England and France was that in the former the king had duties and the peasant had rights; while in the latter the king had rights and the peasants had duties.

There was, however, a class known as peasant proprietors. Nobles who had been impoverished by extravagance were compelled to dispose of portions of their estates and sold them to small farmers, but this ownership of land subjected the owners to the payment of heavy taxes and to exactions of every description.

Another class, known as *metayers*, paid for the use of the land in kind, but they secured only a bare subsistence and made a scanty return. Their implements were rude, their cattle thin, their crops meagre, and their homes mere hovels.

Mirabeau's father, the old marquis, who was somewhat of an authority on this subject of agriculture, wrote: "As practised by our peasants, it is a veritable galley slavery; from their infancy they die by thousands and in their youth they try to find a place anywhere but where they ought to be."

Famine often stalked through the land, and while the peasants starved, the nobles feasted and caroused, making a contrast that was not forgotten when the tocsin of the Revolution sounded.

Beggars crowded the roads. Fifteen thousand were arrested by the authorities in one year during the reign of the great Louis.

In the towns, the conditions were somewhat better than in the country, but the sale of monopolies crippled every branch of commerce and manufacture and centred trade in the hands of the few. Mechanics, too, were subjected to severe and vexatious restraints upon their industry. The only purpose of the government seemed to be to find something to tax.

In most of the towns, the municipal expenses were greater than the revenues and, consequently, everything was falling into decay. Public improvements were out of the question,—repairs were not made on the highways, and in wet weather they were almost impassable. At every town-gate tolls were levied upon the necessaries of life; produce was taxed so heavily that the poor were not able to pay the price for substantial food. The searching and avaricious eyes of the tax officers allowed nothing to escape their scrutiny. The hated octroi stifled trade and ate up the substance of the people until they were reduced to the verge of starvation.

"I sought the stately city of Paris," says the hero in Louvet's Faublas, "and I found high and squalid tenements, long and ludicrously narrow streets, poor wretches everywhere clothed in rags, a crowd of well-nigh naked children. I beheld a dense population and appalling poverty."

"In Paris," says Mercier, "the people are weak, pallid, diminutive, stunted. The rich and the great who possess equipages enjoy the privilege of crushing them or of mutilating them in the streets. . . . There is no convenience for foot passengers, no sidewalks. Hundreds of victims die annually under the carriage wheels."

"People were run over almost every day by the fashionable vehicles, it being the habit of the great to ride very fast."

"I saw," writes Arthur Young, "a poor child run over and probably killed, and have been myself many times blackened with the mud of the ken-

nels," and then adds: "If young noblemen at London were to drive their chaises in streets without footways, as their brethren do at Paris, they would speedily and justly get very well threshed or rolled in the kennel."

The Duke of Bethune, in 1788, driving furiously through the narrow streets, ran over and killed a child; the mother, frantic with grief, held the little one to her bosom, kissed its cheeks and called aloud for it to come back to life; but alas! its spirit had been crushed out under the wheels of the ducal coach. People gathered around to comfort the distracted mother, but the proud duke, looking out of the window of his carriage, not even deigning to dismount, coolly said: "Send the woman to my palace, I will pay her in gold for her loss." The driver whipped up the horses, and, no doubt, the callous and inhuman nobleman soon forgot the accident, or recalled it but as a mere incident in the day's events. It was only a woman of the people that had suffered, it was only a child of the poor that had been killed.

The nobles looked down upon the people with contempt and treated them as if they were not worthy the slightest consideration; even a just complaint was deemed insolence. It was the insufferable arrogance, the supreme indifference of the nobles that planted the seeds of hatred in the hearts of the people.

Professional beggars crowded the streets and the canaille was ever ready for a riot. The public peace was preserved and order was maintained by a large force of municipal militia.

In the face of these depressing, menacing, and melancholy conditions, the extravagance of the court continued and was rapidly exhausting the estates of the nobles. To so great an extent was this the case that, during the Revolution, when an effort was made to pay the creditors of the emigrants out of the proceeds resulting from the sale of their possessions, it was found that most of the estates were mortgaged almost to their full value.

It was an expensive luxury to bask in the rays of the Sun King, and while Louis was bankrupting the state the courtiers were ruining themselves by their extravagance.

But while the nobles were wasting their incomes, money-changers, note-shavers, bankers, and financiers were growing rich, and many of them, as soon as they amassed wealth, had the mean ambition to become ennobled, and they paid large sums for an office to secure a title.

Like all upstarts, vain and contemptible, they looked down on the common people. They were ashamed of their humble birth and turned their backs on their old friends. They were willing to be tolerated by the nobility, and they fawned and flattered to secure the slightest sign of recognition from the old noblesse. They formed a class that added neither dignity to itself nor strength to the state. They schemed to secure advantageous alliances for their daughters by marrying them to the sons of needy nobles, who, in turn, drained the purses of their fathers-in-law to pay for their amusements at the gaming tables and in places of evil resort. The husband gave a title to his wife

in consideration of the payment of a sum of money as great as the father of the wife was willing to give for the empty honor. It was a marriage in that it had the sanction of law, but it was without the sentiment of the heart. It was the trading of a daughter for a title, a custom that has not yet grown stale.

The old noblesse held aloof from these parvenues unless they were compelled by stress of financial want to borrow money or to form an alliance by selling a son. "The noblesse," says De Tocqueville, "is become a caste whose distinct mark is birth," and they looked down upon these "roturiers" of vulgar and plebeian blood with disdain.

The new nobility, however, built splendid palaces, lived luxuriously, painted their escutcheons or their newly acquired family crests in flaming colors on the panels of their coaches, and occasionally entertained at a most sumptuous dinner a stray or needy nobleman with an ancient name, which fact was duly announced next day in the society columns of the papers.

They practised the vices, assumed the pretensions, and aped the manners of their models.

Amidst all these conditions there was not a strong, a patriotic, an intelligent middle class that stood for constitutional rights, that proudly and willingly bore the responsibilities of citizenship and that, when the crisis came, exerted a wholesome influence in protecting the interests of the state and in maintaining the public peace and liberty against violence and anarchy.

The bourgeoisie was seeking distinctions and was drawing away from the proletariat. During the Revolution, after the nobility was overthrown, the rabble turned on the bourgeoisie as if it were a public enemy.

CHAPTER III

LOUIS XIV.—HIS POWER—ETIQUETTE—EXTRAVAGANCE OF THE COURT—THE GLORY OF THE KING

THE French monarchy reached the culmination of its power and glory in the reign of Louis XIV. and from this period we may trace the immediate causes of the Revolution, for in this reign, especially towards its close, we find increased and intensified all the vices and extravagance of the past, together with a depleted treasury, disordered finances, and a state hastening to bankruptcy.

The court at Versailles was the most magnificent in Europe. The king was the source of all light and power. He was the central orb in this planetary system and the great men of the realm revolved about and around him as mere satellites. No potentate ever sat on a throne who received more reverence. Time was consumed in subservient, ceremonial adulation, in paying devotion to a Christian king with greater pomp than was ever witnessed in the most luxurious court of the Orient. Churchmen, statesmen, philosophers, men of letters, generals of unrivalled skill, vied with each other in paying obsequious, sycophantic homage, until personal dignity and independence were lost in a silly theatrical devotion to a painted king.

"Sire, the rain of Versailles does not make wet,"

said a simpering courtier, when the king gave him permission to cover in a shower, and the monarch was greatly pleased. He, no doubt, thought the *bon mot* was worth a pension. Even the great Racine, in a spirit of fulsome flattery, declared that the greatest incentive to perfect the French tongue was that it might express praises worthy so wise and so good a man as Louis XIV. Flunkeyism was the fashion of the day, flattery was the passport to the king's favor.

An irksome, oppressive etiquette was the only occupation of the court. The daily life of Louis, from the hour of rising to that of retiring, was a public spectacle. In reading his life, we wonder when he found time to study or think or give attention to the affairs of state. He seems never to have had a chance to enjoy seclusion or privacy. An Austrian ambassador, in referring to him, wrote: "So constantly was he on the go, his time taken up in following a course of amusements, that his mode of living left him not an hour in the day for attention to important matters."

No one could have sustained the strain and the monotony of such a life unless he had a good digestion, a sound constitution, and a love for adulation and flattery, as well as an utter indifference to the public welfare.

When someone described to Frederick II. the etiquette and ceremony of the French Court, he said if he were monarch of France, his first edict would be to name a substitute who would hold court in his stead.

The king's religious devotions, his morning

ablutions and toilet were made daily in the gaze of the public. "All Versailles," says Macaulay, "came to see Louis dine and sup. He was put to bed at night in the midst of a crowd as great as that which had met to see him rise in the morning. He took his very emetics in state and vomited majestically in the presence of all the *grandes* and *petites entrées*."

Taine, in his "Ancien Régime," has fully described the making of the king's morning toilet,—a daily task, too, let the reader bear in mind. It was not an occasional exhibition. It was a time-honored, well-observed Bourbon custom, for even up to the reign of Louis XVI. a page remarked: "Every evening for six years I have seen the king get into bed in public. It was not omitted ten times to my knowledge, and then accidentally or through indisposition."

At an hour that was made known in advance, the first valet of the bed-chamber awoke his majesty, the king. Five grades, or classes, of privileged persons entered the chamber, one class after the other, in orderly succession and at prescribed intervals, and although the waiting-rooms were large and commodious, there were days when they could hardly hold the crowd of courtiers in attendance.

The first class to enter consisted of the king's children, the princes and the princesses of the blood, the chief doctors, the principal surgeon, and other useful persons. Then followed in turn what was called the "grande *entrée*," which included the great chamberlain, the grand master, the master of

the robes, the first gentleman of the bed-chamber, the Dukes of Orleans and Penthievre, the latter a natural son of the king, some specially favored lords, ladies of honor of the queen's bed-chamber, with a host of barbers, tailors, and valets.

Wine is then poured on the hands of the king. A bowl of holy water is presented, he makes the sign of the cross, and says his prayers. In the presence of this crowd of courtiers and flunkeys, he gets out of bed and puts on his socks,—a most commonplace performance, but with the king it is a matter of grace, every movement governed and guided by the strictest rules of etiquette. The chamberlain and the first gentleman of the bed-chamber, important personages, too, present to the king his *robe de chambre*. He slips it on and then gravely takes a seat on a chair at the side of his bed. At this moment the door is opened and the "*brevets*" enter, while at the same time arrive a squad of serving men, doctors and surgeons in ordinary, "*intendants des menus-plaisirs*," and a number of other persons of less consequence. When the officers of the robe approach the king to dress him, the first gentleman of the bed-chamber announces the names of the grandees who wait at the door. This is the fourth *entrée* called "*de la chambre*," greater in number than all the preceding *entrées*, for now arrive the grand almoner, the master of the chapel, the master of the oratory, the captain and the major of the "*garde du corps*," officers of the French guard, colonel of the regiment of the king, masters of ceremony, foreign ambassadors, ministers of state, marshals of France and a host of

attendants. Tipstaffs command silence and the crowd stands in reverential awe, for the king is about to wash his hands. Two pages put on his slippers and the grand master and the first valet of the robe draw off his majesty's *robe de nuit*, which they hand to an officer, while a valet carries the king's shirt in a surtout of white taffeta. At this point, the fifth *entrée* is announced and another crowd flocks into the bed-chamber and, when silence is restored, the king prepares to put on his shirt. The honor of presenting this garment is reserved to his sons and grandsons, or, in their absence, to princes of the blood royal. Three valets of important station slip it on the body of the king, while two valets hold the king's *robe de chambre* before him as a screen or curtain.

Now begin the final touches. A mirror is brought and tapers illumine the scene. The grand master passes to the king his vest and coat, the latter adorned with the *cordon bleu*. A sword is fastened at his side. A valet brings a basket filled with cravats, a selection is solemnly made, and the master of the *gard robe* fastens it around his majesty's neck. A salver is then presented upon which are three dainty lace handkerchiefs and the king makes choice of one. At last the master of the robe hands him his hat, his gloves, and his cane, and the toilet is completed. The king kneels on a cushion and says his prayers while an almoner in a low voice pronounces the "Oraison," "Quæ-sumus deus omnipotens." Such is the daily morning rising of the sun king.

The queen goes through a like ceremony in her

own bed-chamber. Madame Campan, in her interesting memoirs, describes Marie Antoinette as impatiently waiting on a winter's morning while the infinite details of etiquette occupied a number of ladies of high degree, who slowly and solemnly handed the royal chemise from one to another, in the order of rank, until at last it covered the shivering body of the queen, who angrily exclaimed: "What importunity!"

We have given a description of this remarkable ceremony of the king's "*lever*" without attempting to follow it in all its details as described by Taine.

Louis the Great must have been a man of exceptional qualities to have played this farce without loss of dignity. There is a serio-comic side to all this opera-bouffe performance which in this practical age provokes a smile of derision, even contempt, and yet Louis, constantly in the public eye, engaged in all sorts of ceremonies, always retained the reverence of his court and of his people. He had the faculty of doing small things well. His walk, his strut, his postures, if we may believe his contemporaries, were most impressive. The writers of that period even refer to his stature as majestic, and yet, in truth, he was below rather than above the medium size. Chateaubriand, commenting on this subject, says he was not tall. "A cuirass of his which remains to us, as well as the exhumations at St. Deny's, leaves us in no doubt on this point." And yet this king, five feet eight inches in height, stalking and strutting on high heels, created such an illusion, that, in the eyes of his worshippers, he had the majestic stature of a giant. He had the

LOUIS XIV

From an old engraving

art of making little things look great. Perhaps this is a useful talent, for he played his part with consummate skill and success and produced the effect desired. If he had only endeavored to be what he desired to appear, he would have been a great king in the broadest sense. "He was little in everything but the art of simulating greatness."

How useless, how frivolous, all this ceremony seems! What a waste of time and effort! It was a daily rehearsal, a brilliant *mise en scene* in which the king played the leading role.

In the East, the monarch conceals himself as much as possible from the eyes of the vulgar; he keeps aloof from the public and appears only on feast and holy days, believing that familiarity not only breeds contempt, but robs him of that reverence and awe which his sacred person should always inspire in the hearts of his loyal subjects; but Louis was not controlled by any such ideas. He lived always in the public gaze. No monarch ever filled a larger space in the world's eye, and yet he was not a general, nor a statesman, nor a man of letters; he was nothing but a theatrical king. In the language of Bolingbroke: "He was the best actor of majesty that ever filled a throne." "There never was," says Macaulay, "so consummate a master of what our James the First would have called kingcraft, of all those arts which most advantageously display the merits of a prince and most completely hide his defects."

He stood neither for political liberty nor advanced civilization. His supreme egotism centred in himself all the power and glory of the state.

His policies were selfish, his principles despotic. His absolutism had been created and strengthened by the genius of Richelieu and Mazarin in the prior reign, but in his over-weening vanity and egotism, it is questionable whether or not it ever occurred to him that he was under any obligations to them.

When he assumed absolute control of the kingdom, he summoned his minister and addressed him thus: "Sir: It has pleased me hitherto to permit my affairs to be governed by the late cardinal; I will in future be my own prime minister and you shall aid me with your counsels when I ask you for them." His chancellor was to seal no decree except by his orders, and his secretaries of state and superintendent of finance were to sign nothing without his command. He looked upon the kingdom as his own,—he was the state. He regarded France as his private, personal property. He inherited it from his ancestors as a man would a farm stocked with horses and sheep and cattle.

He built palaces, squandered gold on his mistresses, and showered honors on his favorites. If a friendly nobleman was in debt, he directed a pension, and all this extravagance was paid for out of money raised under the most unjust and pernicious system of taxation the world has ever known.

"L'etat c'est moi," says Michelet, "was but the simple enunciation of a fact." It was not a mere phrase, but the actual truth when uttered by Louis. All authority centred in him. "O, kings," cried the Bishop of Meaux, in his enthusiastic loyalty, "exercise your power boldly, for it is divine—ye are gods!" Even the great Bossuet, in the presence

of Louis XIV. and all his court, preached that "kings were divine, were as gods on earth." Royalty and loyalty run mad.

The Duke de Villeroi, addressing Louis XV. while he was yet a child, said: "See, my master, this great kingdom, Oh! well, all this is for you, all this belongs to you, you are the master." A wholesome idea to instil into the heart and mind of a child destined to rule a nation. The boy was impressed by the teachings, for, in after years, when on the throne, he addressed the following remarkable language to the Parliament of Paris: "The sovereign authority is vested in my person; legislative power, without dependence and without division, exists in me alone, public security emanates wholly from me;—I am its supreme custodian." Strange as this appears to us, it was the truth, the king was but stating a fact. The wish of the king was the law of the land. "Le roi le veut" had the force of a statute. "Car tel est mon plaisir" was a sufficient reason or excuse for an act of tyranny.

There were no constitutional barriers that protected the people from his despotic absolutism; he could imprison his subjects by *lettres de cachet*, he could banish them by *lettres d'exil*, he could silence Parliament by a *lit de justice*, he could confiscate private property and tax almost without restraint.

Quesnay, physician to Louis XV., once remarked to Madame du Hausset, a witty and celebrated *femme de chambre:* "Whenever I see the king, I say to myself, 'There is a man who can cut my head off.' 'Oh!' said she, 'the king is too good.'" "The lady's maid," says Michelet, "summed up in

one word the guarantees of the monarchy. The king was too good to cut his head off; that was no longer agreeable to custom. But he could, with one word, send him to the Bastile and there forget him."

In spiritual as well as in temporal matters, he exercised his unrestricted authority, and yet a distinguished French historian has said that "Louis was more arbitrary than despotic, for he did not exercise all the power he possessed."

War, pomp, glittering pageants, favorites and mistresses ate up the substance of the state. The king's concubines made draughts upon the public treasury, enriched favorites, pensioned pimps, dispensed the honors of the kingdom, appointed and dismissed ministers, elevated churchmen, promoted officers in the army, exiled and imprisoned personal enemies and coolly banished the queen to the quietude of the domestic circle. From the days of Diana of Poitiers to the Du Barry, the king's favorite mistress was supreme. The proudest men in the realm followed meekly in her train, and stood like suppliants at the door of her chamber, for this was the main avenue to the favor of the king.

There were few monarchs among the Bourbons more completely under the influence of their mistresses than Louis XIV., notwithstanding his exalted opinion of his own self-importance. He was absolutely under petticoat rule, and was most contemptible in his subserviency to it, even forgetting the respect due to his queen in public. He did not have the first instincts of the gentleman, for he paid court to his concubines in the presence of his

wife, even upon public occasions. When he went to the wars in Flanders he travelled with two mistresses and his wife in the same carriage,—the patient, gentle queen, Maria Theresa, submitting to the outrage no doubt because she had been taught that her royal spouse the king could do no wrong. Poor woman, she suffered without complaint this shame and humiliation because she had been brought up under the iniquitous system of government which teaches that God and the king rule jointly, and that loyalty to one means devotion to the other. She was taught to believe that the conduct of the king is not the subject of criticism any more than are the decrees of Providence.

The harem of Louis was always well stocked. Marie di Mancini, La Valliere, Madame de Montespan, succeeded each other in his royal affection. The last one indulged in such extravagance and licentiousness that her conduct actually shocked the moral sentiment even of France. The open and direct censures of the great Bossuet fell upon her ears without having the slightest effect. She bore the king seven bastards, and was housed in the royal palace during her confinements as if she were the lawful queen of the realm. Her children were legitimized by the king, made princes of the blood, and enriched at the public expense.

Madame de Maintenon, another mistress, was one of the most remarkable women of her day. She obtained a complete ascendency over her royal lover. He advised with her on the most important affairs of state and was in the habit of addressing her as "Madame *Soliditè*." Her society is de-

scribed by Madame de Sevigné as "truly delicious." It must be said to her credit that her influence over the king was, in some ways, beneficial to France, and in this particular she was an exception, and rose somewhat above the women of her class. It is believed that she was married to the king secretly. She was born a Protestant, but having renounced her faith, she became, after her apostasy, one of the most intolerant bigots of that most intolerant reign.

Every time Louis XIV. made war, it was out of pique, in the interest of his family, for mere personal glory, or out of consideration for a woman. He consumed the revenues of the state in warlike enterprises, and a million men were sacrificed to his vainglorious ambition. His attempted conquest of the Low Countries was without reason or excuse. The courageous and simple-hearted Dutch had offered no provocation. The war was undertaken in defiance of every principle of justice and humanity and in contravention of every principle of international law.

Under the old feudal system, heavy as it was, the nobles bravely and honorably, in council and in the field, served the king; now they simply formed a class to wait upon his majesty and to add color and beauty to the court. They possessed all the graces and refinements of polite society, but they lacked every quality that fitted them to serve the real interests of the state.

The old barons, brave, valorous, chivalrous, trained to war, furnished soldiers for the king's service. Now the king, to maintain the dignity and

splendor of his court, must have his personal guard of infantry and cavalry, consisting of nine thousand and fifty men, costing each year for their maintenance seven million six hundred and eighty-one thousand livres.

He had a dozen residences besides his palace at Versailles and all were maintained in the most luxurious manner. There were four thousand persons for the king's civil household. He had one thousand eight hundred and fifty-seven horses for his own use and two hundred and seventeen vehicles. He clothed in livery at a cost of five hundred and forty thousand livres, annually, one thousand four hundred and fifty-eight servants and lackeys; and all this extravagance was paid for by the people, many of whom had hardly the bare necessaries of life.

His stables and kennels were most luxuriously appointed. While the wintry blasts howled through and around the dilapidated huts of his poor subjects, his hounds and horses were well fed, well housed, and well groomed. A dog of the royal kennels received more consideration and far better fare than a peasant.

Balls, banquets, receptions, operas, occupied the time of the king and his legion of courtiers. It was a constant round of pleasure, with no time to be spared for the consideration of important state matters. "When society becomes so attractive, people live for it alone."

The artificiality of a social life such as we have described weakens the intellect of those who devote their lives to its purposes, and who breathe and live

in its tainted, poisonous atmosphere. It robs men of their independence and saps the virtue of women. It creates a class of flunkeys, toadies, and silken courtiers who, living in this constant whirl and glare, look upon all people outside of their exclusive circle as of little consequence. Those who live under these conditions develop the meanest qualities of heart and soul, and they become both slaves and tyrants; slaves to the king and tyrants to the people. It is invariably the case that the men who are the most subservient in disposition make the most despotic masters.

"The court was the sepulchre of the nation"; in it were buried all the honor, independence, public spirit, and civic responsibility of the nobles, as well as the rights and the liberties of the people. In the face of all the grandeur and display of the court, the country was hastening to destruction. The body politic was in a morbid state,—it had the hectic flush that gave color to the features, but which really was the sign of disease, of consuming fever.

The financial condition was alarming, and the misery of the people increased from day to day. Appeals were made to the King and his ministers for relief, but as the nobles and the clergy would not surrender their privileges nor moderate and temper their exactions, nothing could be done to ameliorate the distressing condition of the people. "Men ate grass like sheep and died like so many flies."

What is more touching than the appeal addressed to the king by the villagers of Champagne: "Sire, the only command we hear from you is for money.

We did hope that this would end, but every year the demand is for more. We do not hold you responsible for this, because we love you, but those whom you employ. They know better how to look after their own affairs than yours. We believed that they deceived you, and we said in our chagrin: If our good king only knew this. We are burdened with taxes of every kind. To you we have given, up to the present time, a part of our bread, and if this continues we shall be in want. If you could see the poor huts in which we live, the poor food that we eat, your heart would be touched. . . . That which grieves us is, that those who have the most pay the least. We pay the *tailles*, but the ecclesiastics and the nobles, who own the best land, pay nothing. Why is it that those who are rich pay the least and those who are poor pay the most?"

The complaint goes on to state that the peasants would plant their vines on the sunny slopes, were it not that they are so persecuted by the excisemen that they would rather pull up the vines already growing than plant new ones. "The wine we would make would go to them, scarcely any of it to us. Sire: we would demand much more, but you cannot do all at once."

Still no relief came, and the court in no jot or tittle abated its extravagance. Does it not seem strange that so tender an appeal would not find a response in the heart and sympathy of any ruler, even though he were a Louis?

But the days of this monarch were fast drawing to a close. Ceremonial had become a habit,

and he played his part to the last. His appetite for power increased with his years, and his love for pomp and splendor never left him. He lived beyond his time and became a miserable old man, lingering on the scene long after death ought to have claimed him, reluctant to surrender the power he had so coveted and the splendor he had so fostered. He had to be amused and flattered to the last, and so the courtiers played on the credulity and the vanity of the decrepit old king by presenting to him sham embassies represented as coming from foreign states. Only a few days before his death, seated upon his throne, his weak, emaciated body burdened with his royal robes, he received with great solemnity an embassy made up of his own courtiers disguised as Persian ambassadors. It was his last great reception before he himself appeared at the foot of the throne of the King of kings.

After all his glory, he was borne to the grave in a manner that was in sad contrast to the splendor of his prior estate. The ceremony was pompous enough, but it was without regret and tears and reverence. It was indeed a sorry affair, and the people hissed and threw stones at the hearse on its way to the tomb.

He left France almost impoverished, overwhelmed with debt, with her credit destroyed, her maritime power prostrate, and poverty and famine stalking through the land in every direction. All this was the result of his pride, ambition and extravagance.

" The government of Louis XIV. was a great, a

powerful fact," writes Guizot, "but it was built upon sand." The results of his rule were but the inevitable effects of the inherent, the incorrigible vices of absolute power. In the language of Mignet, "Louis XIV. wore out the main-spring of absolute monarchy by too protracted tension and too violent use."

His reign had been made most brilliant by soldiers, statesmen, orators, and men of letters. The literature was affected by the theatrical character of the age. The oratory was most florid in style. The drama especially was stilted, and lacked that natural simplicity which is the characteristic feature of the English school. The characters of Racine do not talk nor converse, they declaim. It is impossible to believe that they could have an existence anywhere but on the stage.

Corneille, Racine, Molière, Fenelon, Bossuet, Flechier, Massillon, Boileau, Pascal, Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, Colbert, and Luvois marked the era as the golden age of France. But all this fame and glory covered a state that was unstable and corrupt at heart. The glory was but the mask covering the hideous features of disease.

CHAPTER IV

LOUIS XV.—LOUIS XVI.—MARIE ANTOINETTE

Louis XV. was a misery, a calamity, to his country. He began his reign with the title of the "Well Beloved," a title with which he soon parted.

Since the days of the most debauched of the Cæsars, profligacy had never been conducted in so open a manner. The boudoirs of his mistresses were the council chambers of the state. France was a government of harlots. The king spent much of his time dawdling with his courtesans in the safely guarded and scandalous precincts of the "Parc aux Cerfs" or else in that famous, or rather infamous, room at Petit Trianon, where his companions, men and women, debauched and lost to every sense of shame, sat at the tables as naked as when they were born. Wines and viands were served on dumb-waiters, lest the presence of servants should interfere with their lustful pleasures. The prostitutes who joined with the "Lord's Anointed" in his revels were not women of the town, but ladies of the court of noble and titled lineage. The whole social system of the higher classes was honey-combed with vice and sensuality. The nobles were openly, scandalously immoral in their lives and they did not pay to virtue even the tribute of hypocrisy. There was no attempt made to conceal their immoralities,—decency was mocked, ridiculed, upbraided.

Louis was a libertine, bestial in his appetites. He cared only for his pleasures, and they were such as would have disgraced a Nero, a Heliogabalus. He was cold, heartless, cynical, indifferent, a mere voluptuary, who centred his confidence and affection in nobody. That merry rogue, Charles II. of England, who resembled him in many ways, redeemed in a measure his character when, in his last moments, he begged those about his death-bed not to let poor Nell starve. Louis had no emotions so generous in his low, mean soul. His mistresses who appealed to his passions never aroused the affections of his heart; he seemed to have no generous impulse.

Patriotism was, with him, not even a sentiment. "After me, the deluge," reveals the character of the man. The future of his country gave him no anxious concern. "The kingdom will last as long as I do," was to him a complacent and satisfying thought.

His extravagance, notwithstanding a depleted public treasury, and in the face of a starving peasantry, showed an utter disregard of the instincts of humanity. And worse than all, he speculated in grain while grim famine was stalking through his kingdom.

According to Argenson, he had in his stables, in the year 1751, four thousand horses, and his person and palace cost that year sixty-eight million francs, almost one-fourth of the public revenue.

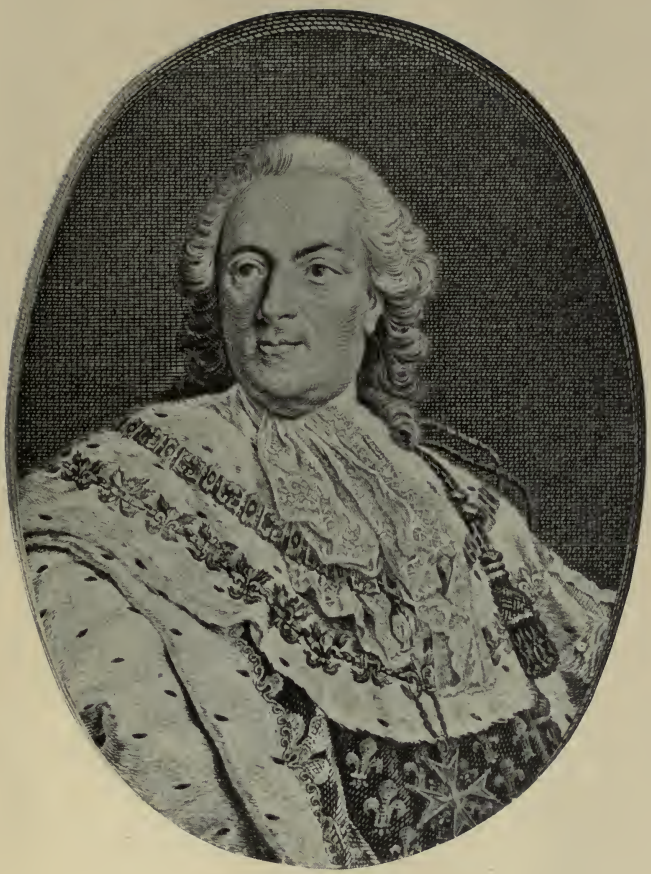
The Pompadour, daughter of an exiled roué, and the Du Barry, natural child of Anne Bèqus, both from the common people, were installed at Ver-

sailles as the mistresses of the king, and he offended the old order by breaking down the barrier of seclusion.

With these haughty nobles it was not a question of morals but of blood. No one objected to the king's installing his mistresses in the royal household, but they should, under all considerations and from motives of decency and propriety, be taken from the ranks of the nobility and not from the bourgeoisie or the Third Estate. There was no special objection to a noble woman selling her virtue to the king, but to elevate one of the daughters of the common people to the exalted position of royal mistress was out of all reason. How base, how ignoble must that society have been in which the nobility considered it an honor for the king to debauch their daughters! In one case the king raised in succession, one after the other, all the daughters of an ancient and distinguished family to the station of royal favorite.

During the Revolution, many years after the ancient régime had passed away, the story goes that upon one occasion the Du Barry, mistress of Louis XV., met one of the old-time court ladies and, in the course of a conversation, she said to her: "How you all must have hated me." "Oh, no," was the reply; "we did not hate, we envied you."

At this period the successful men of the middle class who had acquired wealth were gradually coming to the front, and they began to mingle with the nobility. As the wealth of the latter diminished, the importance of the former increased.



LOUIS XV

After a painting by L. M. Vanloo

Having in many instances accumulated enormous wealth, they built magnificent palaces, entertained lavishly and sumptuously, and patronized artists and men of letters. They had all the qualities of noblemen, except the distinction of birth, and when mingling in aristocratic circles they conversed upon every subject but that of ancestry. They carefully avoided all reference to the past, for fear they might run against an honest publican or a humble shoemaker, and this taint in the blood or lineage would have been a blot on the 'scutcheon. There were very few among them who were "neither ashamed of their origin nor vain of their elevation."

There was another class of men that, at this time, was exerting a great influence among the people and helping materially to mould public opinion. The lawyers were, as a rule, fairly well educated, and in this respect were superior to all but the highest classes and the men of letters. They were students, orators, and writers, and representing the people, in the defense of their rights, they had every opportunity to become familiar with the miseries of the poor and the unjust exactions of the state. They were disciples of the new philosophy. In religion, they were liberal in their views, and in politics, as a rule, they were ardent republicans. They were of humble birth and, consequently, excluded from the society of the privileged classes. As men of intelligence and spirit, they smarted under the insolence of the nobles and chafed under the social and political distinctions that were so severely and unjustly drawn. They were fully in-

formed on current matters and events, kept abreast of the times, and led the way to the coming Revolution, in which, when it arrived, they took a most prominent and influential part.

The subtle influence of the writings of philosophers and free-thinkers was sapping the religious faith of the people. The coarse materialism of Helvetius, the sneers and satirical sallies of Voltaire, the cant and sentimental rhapsodies of Rousseau, the atheistical doctrines and the wild, fierce democracy of Diderot, were undermining the foundations of both church and state.

Michelet calls Voltaire and Rousseau the two apostles of humanity, and further adds, "When these two men have passed, the Revolution is accomplished in the intellectual world. Now it becomes the duty of their sons, legitimate and illegitimate, to expound and diffuse it in a hundred ways. . . . Mirabeau, Beaumarchais, Raynal, Mably and Siéyès are now to do their work."

Even the courtiers, affected by the spirit and the temper of the times, aided unconsciously in the diffusion of the ideas of popular rights. With them it was a mere fashion to espouse the liberal cause, but a most dangerous one for themselves, in view of existing conditions. On the other hand, churchmen affected a cynical and sceptical spirit and smiled at the credulity of the people who accepted with implicit faith the doctrines of the church. "A simple priest, a parson, must believe something or he would be considered a hypocrite, but at the same time he must not be quite sure of what he believed or else he would be considered

intolerant. A grand-vicar may, however, smile a little over a sally against religion, a bishop laugh quite openly, and a cardinal even add, himself, some taunt."

Everything was a-ripening for the harvest.

Louis XV., stricken by a loathsome, contagious, and fatal disease, died in an upper chamber of the palace, abandoned to his fate and deserted by those time-serving creatures who had lived on his favors and fattened on his bounty. At a safe distance they watched for the appearance of the lighted candle in the window that was to be the signal announcing the moment of his death, and when it appeared, the palace immediately resounded with the shouts of the courtiers hailing the new king.

The remains of the dead monarch were unceremoniously huddled into a grave by his immuned attendants,—a fitting end to so contemptible a career.

It is said that when Louis XV. was dying he exclaimed: "I feel the torments of the damned." His attendant replied: "Not yet, sire." It was a little early, but really not much too soon.

The people welcomed Louis XVI. when he came to the throne just as noisily and eagerly as they had welcomed Louis XV. They let one die in his bed, the other they butchered on the scaffold. The grandson had to suffer for the sins of his grandsire.

"What a glorious time!" said Talleyrand, referring to the coronation of Louis XVI., "a young king scrupulously moral and uncommonly modest, ministers well known for their ability and uprightness, a queen whose affableness, grace and kindness

tempered the austere virtues of her consort; everybody filled with respect, the heart of every subject overflowing with affection for the young sovereigns; joy was everywhere. Never did so bright a spring precede so stormy an autumn, a winter so dismal." In the sky of France was the bow of promise, but the clouds soon gathered and the tempest broke.

It was on May 11, 1774, that Louis XVI. ascended the throne. A person more unsuited to meet and cope with the conditions could hardly have been found in the kingdom. He was amiable and virtuous, qualities in this instance that were of no practical use, for he was without genius, ability, or capacity, and yet when we survey the kingdom and consider the prevailing conditions, it is a question whether or not the strongest man could have done more than delay the coming of the Revolution.

Louis was a well-meaning prince, fairly decent in his conduct, and utterly incapable in his rule. In a court of vice and immorality he was an example of probity and chastity, but he was just the sort of prince whose weakness and vacillation, in those stirring times, gave impetus and strength to the motives of revolution.

When an effort was made in his reign to ameliorate the misery and the sufferings of the poor, to effect financial economy in the administration of the government, it only intensified the hatred of the oppressed. The feeble attempt to relieve only revealed the weakness and the incapacity of the state, and its inability to accomplish the needed re-

forms. " Comment on souleva le peuple en voulant le soulager."

" What do you suppose that carriage cost me?" inquired Louis XV. of Choiseul. " About six thousand livres, Sire." " It cost me thirty thousand," replied the king. " Then it is robbery and we must have an investigation." " No, no, no," cried Louis, in alarm, " let it be, let it be. We must have no reforms. There are too many people interested in keeping things as they are."

This king knew the danger in innovation; he was suggesting no changes nor reforms. He was only anxious not to have his saturnalia disturbed.

Louis was right; he understood that the state, rotten as it was, would not be able to stand any repairs. " However rotten a house may be," writes Von Holst, " it stands astonishingly long, if it but be left to itself. In a certain stage of decay, its power of resistance is increased by its being equally rotten in all its parts. Finally it must fall in any case, but the catastrophe is hastened on by tearing down a part here and there and rebuilding it with new and sound material. The rotten rest is not capable of sustaining the weight of the new pieces. Just because the new is sound, it causes the old to break down sooner than it otherwise would have done."

The whole system was so rotten that it required complete demolition before it could be restored. A mere patching here and there, as Von Holst so wisely states, would have only weakened the structure and hastened its fall. It would have revealed

the weakness of the whole system and the necessity for a complete restoration.

In the year 1780, during the reign of Louis XVI., there was an effort made to reduce the expenditures of the court. It was called "the reform of the mouth," and yet, under the reduction, the three old spinster aunts of Louis XVI. received annually six hundred thousand livres for their table expenses, the queen four million livres, and the king's two brothers eight million three hundred thousand. Is it any wonder that Lazarus was lying at the door of the rich? A further reduction was made in the king's household expenses in 1788; but the reduction was so slight that it seemed ridiculous to call it a reform.

These feeble attempts to economize in no way prevented the growth of the annual deficit.

Louis XV. had exhausted the public revenues in frivolous and extravagant living, and relief could be had only under a system of rigid and genuine retrenchment. The reign of Louis XVI. was welcomed because it was thought the reforms he would inaugurate would relieve the financial distress. His character was taken as a guarantee against the continuance of the abuses and the extravagance of the prior reign. But Louis had no just conception of what was required.

For some years commerce and manufactures had been improving. The government receipts had been increasing. In other words, conditions were not any worse than they had been, and in many respects they were somewhat better. In spite of Bourbonism, feudal burdens, unjust restrictions on

trade and commerce, the wealth of the country had been actually increasing. Taine is of the opinion that "the aristocracy was never so worthy of power as at the moment it was going to lose it." But it was too late to save the ancient régime. The people had no faith in those who had so long squandered the public moneys and burdened the state with abuses.

France needed a strong man at the helm, one in whom the people had confidence. Revolution was impending, was inevitable; the distresses had to be relieved, real economy in the administration of the government practised, class distinctions, exemptions and privileges abolished, a system of equal and just taxation adopted, the refunding of the public debt at a lower rate of interest effected, and the rights of the people secured by constitutional forms. But all these changes might have been accomplished without the terror, blood, and factional strife that marked the Revolution's devastating course.

The king, the nobles, the clergy, and the Third Estate, should, at all odds and at all hazards, have kept together and jointly advised on matters relating to the public weal. If a strong prince had controlled the nobility and the clergy, he could easily have secured the confidence and support of the people, and the needed reforms could have been effected without having to pass through the tragedy of the Reign of Terror. There is no question but that Louis sympathized with the sufferings of the people, but he had no decision of character and he lacked sense and judgment to suggest remedies,

and the ability to cope with conditions. He was conservative and moderate in his views, but totally unfitted to guide the current of events or direct the policies of the nation. He could not read the lessons of the past, appreciate the conditions of the present, nor prognosticate the dangers of the future. He was neither a philosopher, a seer, nor a prophet. His inanity provokes pity rather than contempt.

Louis was plain, unostentatious in manner, and simple in his habits and amusements. He was awkward, slovenly, and dull. He was passionately fond of hunting, was a great glutton, and would frequently get tipsy. All day long in his workshop he would study the intricacies of a lock, a door-lock, and apparently took more pleasure in this task than in studying the questions of constitutional reform.

Louis XVI., of all the kings of his line, if we consider him personally, is the one who should not have gone to the scaffold, for in his heart he really did desire the people's welfare. It was the weakness of his character that gave strength to the enemies of the throne. If he had been a man of firmness and decision, he might have changed or directed the course of the Revolution. Had he been a politician he could have won to his cause the strong men in the Assembly, but he was always half-hearted in his counsel and hesitated to carry out his half-formed plans.

By his weakness and vacillation he gave courage, daring, and audacity to the demagogues, agitators and leaders of the mob. His friends lost confidence, honest men grew timid, and his ene-

mies became insolent. Half a dozen times had he acted with decision he could have turned the tide in his favor, but at the critical moment he surrendered to his fears.

Instead of being born to the purple he ought to have been the son of a well-to-do bourgeoise. Behind the counter in his father's shop his industry, honesty, and thrift would have been useful and remunerative, and, in time, he might have made quite a successful tradesman.

He had aroused a sense of despair even in the heart of Louis XV., who, in one of his sardonic moods, when the weak amiability of the dauphin induced his contempt, said, with a sneer: "When I am gone I should like very much to know how Berry will pull through with it."

Berry is no longer dauphin, he is now king, and a sorry pull he will make of it.

Marie Antoinette played her part in provoking the resentment of the people and in hastening the Revolution. She had been trained by her mother, Maria Theresa, to occupy the throne of France, and was fourteen years of age when she left the Austrian capital to become the wife of the dauphin. Louis XV. had debauched the court and it was a nest of lust, vice, and intrigue. Gallantry and frivolity were its chief occupations,—a poor school for the training of a beautiful, light-hearted, capricious girl, who loved admiration and who was dominated by a desire to charm and captivate.

The man chosen for her husband, heavy, awkward, retiring, uninteresting, passionless, was about the last man in that gay and gallant court

who was fitted by nature to be the mate of this madcap of a girl. Even while all France was ringing with the fame of her beauty and her personal charm, he was without enthusiasm and apparently without desire. His conduct was so peculiar after his marriage that she asked her mother if it was not customary for a husband to visit the bed-chamber of his wife.

She must have been a woman of indescribable charm of manner, but the portraits that have come down to us do not warrant the rapturous descriptions some of her admirers give of her personal beauty. Arthur Young refers to her as "a most beautiful woman." Goethe saw her on her way to Paris and described her as of "beauteous and lofty mien, cheerful as it was imposing." Madame Campan calls her "that enchanting being," while Edmund Burke, in one of his eloquent flights, exclaims: "And surely never lighted on this orb, which she seemed hardly to touch, a more delightful vision." And quoting again from a high authority: "In short, it is extremely difficult to convey to any one who has not seen the queen any idea of all the grace and all the dignity that were combined in her." It, no doubt, was this grace and dignity and charm of manner that specially impressed, rather than the beauty of her face.

Madame Le Brun, who painted her portrait, describes her as "tall, exquisitely well made, sufficiently plump without being too much so. Her arms were superb, her hands small, perfect in form, and her feet charming. Her gait was more graceful than any woman in France; she held her head

very erect with a majesty which distinguished the sovereign amidst all her court. Her features were not regular,—she derived from her family that long, narrow oval, peculiar to the Austrian nation. Her eyes were not large, their color was nearly blue, her nose was thin and handsome, her mouth not too large, though her lips were rather thick. But the most remarkable thing about her face was the brilliancy of her complexion."

She was self-willed, thoughtless, impulsive, haughty and imperious. She made a grave mistake in setting at defiance the strict rules of etiquette and, we may add, the laws of propriety. Her careless and capricious conduct disturbed and shocked the stately, dignified, and ceremonious court of Louis XV. Depraved and corrupt as it was, the women endeavored to conceal their intrigues and love affairs under the mask of mere coquetry. They assumed a virtue if they had it not. But Marie Antoinette, by her careless, free and open manner, gave every opportunity to the court gossips to shake their heads and wag their venomous tongues. No women are more severe in their denunciation of others than those who have sins of their own to hide. Sin, like misery, loves company, and the wicked excuse their own vices by pointing to those of others,—especially when they can point to a queen whose lofty position makes her a shining example.

Her conduct was surely not free from suspicion and censure, and the scandal of the court made her follies and indiscretions appear as vices. The ugly Countess of Provence, whom she had snubbed and

ridiculed, took every opportunity to circulate reports that reflected even on her virtue, while the homely daughters of Louis XV., whom in one of his moments of raillery he had nicknamed Loque, Coche, and Graille, added flavor to every vicious story.

These reports soon reached the ears of the people, who were eager to believe every piece of juicy gossip that escaped from the precincts of the court.

Her decree at Trianon, that the king should not be allowed to enter that domain without her special permission, subjected her to all sorts of criticism.

When she was attacked by measles, she chose four dandies of the court as gentlemen of the bedchamber to wait upon her by night and by day. After this peculiar conduct, there was, in the opinion of her enemies, no longer any reason to believe in her honor. The courtiers chosen by the queen to nurse her through her illness were, to be sure, men of the world, but she may have thought there was safety in numbers. If she had chosen only one, she would have had no excuse for her conduct.

Before condemning the queen too severely for what appears to us to be more than an impropriety, we must bear in mind that it was customary in those days for ladies in the highest circles of society to receive male visitors while in bed or even while in a bath. In the latter case, the water was made opaque by pouring two or three quarts of milk into the tub. Ladies, without any hesitation whatever, would dress and undress in the presence of their male servants and even admit to their bou-

doirs, while making their toilets, their gentlemen callers. "O tempora! O mores!"

The conduct of Marie Antoinette, in choosing her nurses, did not specially disturb nor shock the court, nor did it call forth a remonstrance, so far as is known, from her confiding husband. Some envious old dowagers, however, soon sent the news abroad. The people were a little more particular in their notions of propriety than the court, and consequently the queen's reputation greatly suffered.

It had been said by those who were in a position to know that she had been found in compromising situations; that she had encouraged the attention of handsome young fellows like the dashing Lord Strathavon, Counts Fersen and Esterhazy, and even the worthless rake, Lauzun; and when the story of the diamond necklace was told, the people readily believed that the old roué, De Rohan, could have induced the queen to yield to his solicitations for so precious a gift. Every fair-minded person, however, who has studied the facts in that celebrated case must, at least, admit that there is no reliable testimony, nor is there any conclusive evidence that proves the queen had anything whatever to do with the transaction. The parties concerned in the affair were absolutely unworthy of belief, and the silly, ambitious, lecherous Rohan was but a victim of the wiles of the intriguing Lamottes, who played upon the passions and the ambitions of that old rake to their hearts' content. But the story was one that readily found a lodgment in the public mind, for the people were already suspicious

and even anxious to believe anything that reflected upon her honor and her virtue. The unwholesome affair deprived her of the little respect that was left in the hearts of the people for their queen, and marked her as doomed forever. Her reputation was soiled, and in the opinion of the public she was a common intriguer who had surrendered her body for a bauble.

The statement that Count Fersen was the father of the dauphin is based upon the merest rumor, and is one of those stories that readily find circulation, but rest upon evidence that even in the court of a Dogberry would find neither consideration nor credence. It is the kind of story that unfairly injures the reputation of a woman, for she cannot answer it nor set up a plea in defence without subjecting herself to further slander and detraction. It was vicious in its origin, unfair and contemptible in its statement, without proof in its support, and a mere guess in its conclusions.

Dancing, gambling, dressing, and fêtes were her principal diversions, but it was fashionable for all women in her class to indulge in these amusements. Her passion for gambling, however, became a public scandal; upon the turn of a card she would risk a fortune. In dress, her taste was most extravagant. "Fashion at Versailles," says Watson in his charming "Story of France," "was as giddy a wanton as ever frisked from fad to fancy, and nobody could keep pace with it unless he lived in the palace or on the national treasury."

Within the covers of her prayer-book she had carefully concealed an obscene novel, which at

mass she read instead of her prayers. This was neither moral nor orthodox, and throws a strong light upon her real character.

The rumor that she had named Trianon "Petit Vienne" and "Petit Schönbrunn" made her a foreigner and a stranger in the eyes of the jealous French. In the belief of many she was but "a foreign spy in high position." She was dubbed the "hated Austrian," and to her influence, intrigues, schemes, and extravagance were attributed the woes and miseries of the state.

Michelet says that "when the papers of Louis XVI. were found on the 10th of August, in the iron chest, people read with astonishment that during the first years of her marriage he had looked upon his youthful bride as a mere agent of Austria." Brissot, in his memoirs, quotes a letter dated October 17, 1774, which states that "the king caused her correspondence with Vienna to be watched by Thugut, in whom she confided."

Her proud mother, Maria Theresa, with that German characteristic, love of the fatherland, had instilled the sentiment of patriotism into the hearts of all her children. She had many daughters occupying the thrones of Europe, and every union had been made with the single purpose of supporting the Austrian alliance. Marie Caroline was Queen of Naples; Marie Amelia, Queen of Sardinia; Marie Charlotte, Duchess of Parma; while Marie Christine, the eldest daughter, governed with her husband the Austrian Netherlands. They were constantly in correspondence with the Austrian court, retained a love for their native land, and were ever

alert to advance its interests and protect its alliances.

Marie Antoinette was always Austrian at heart. In vain did she describe herself as "La Jeune Française," and that she was French even to the points of her nails. This assumed enthusiasm was to force herself to believe what she felt was not true, and to impress the people with her loyalty to France. Especially must her home love have been intensified when she knew that she was hated and denounced by the French people because of her foreign birth, but she had herself much to blame for this hatred.

Her character has been the subject of adulation and abuse. On one side her partisans laud her as a saint; on the other, her enemies denounce her as a demon, a fiend incarnate whose spirit was cold and haughty and whose disposition was selfish and cruel. Not only in the opinion of her detractors did she lack the loyalty and fidelity of a wife, but also the love and devotion of a mother. The crimes imputed to her were unnatural in their wickedness and were such as would have disgraced a Messalina. She was charged, among other things, with having debauched her own son. Many of these charges were without foundation; in fact, there was nothing upon which to base them but the cruel rumors of a suspicious and jealous court and the hatred of an enraged and a prejudiced people. No queen in history was ever more cordially hated by her subjects than Marie Antoinette. No wonder when the States General met she dreaded the issue, for with a woman's clear perception she saw, through

the mist, the dark horizon beyond which threatened the coming storm; she could distinctly hear the mutterings of the distant thunder, while to wiser eyes and ears the future seemed full of hope and promise.

During the Revolution she was accused of the vilest crimes. Fishwomen in the market place, with arms akimbo, regaled the gaping crowd with stories of her vice and amours; the theatres nightly rang with ribald songs and the coarsest jokes at her expense; lewd and suggestive pictures of her were sold by hawkers at the street corners; even soldiers on guard, as she passed, would whisper, so that their indecent comments could be heard; the table in her boudoir was covered with anonymous letters. Her ears were constantly assailed with the hateful cry: "Long live the Duke of Orleans!" If she walked in the gardens of Versailles or the Tuileries, even the children jeered and hissed her. Her name was bandied in the *salons*, in the clubs, in the taverns, and in the gossipy precincts of the Palais Royal.

In truth, she was neither a saint nor a fiend. She, perhaps, was not much worse than any young woman with beauty, health and vivacious spirit would have been who was thrown into a gay and voluptuous court, where every courtier was a gallant and where almost every woman secretly had her *affaire d'amour*.

The only man who seemed to be deaf, blind and indifferent to the rumors was her simple, confiding, unsuspicious husband, who, if he had possessed half her spirit, would have defended her name from

attack and would have protected her from insult and suspicion; but he was never more than amiable, and he could neither mould the character of a woman nor direct the policies of a state. He was as blind and as gullible as Belisarius, although it is not intended for a moment to intimate that his wife was an Antonina.

She was, to say the least, a very foolish woman. She lived in the light that beats upon the throne, and she ought to have known that her every folly would be discovered and magnified. She lacked tact and made the mistake of disregarding the duties she owed to the public, and to her exalted and sacred office of queen. She neglected to observe the proprieties of life, and yet this utter disregard of public opinion and indifference to it may be taken as proof of her honesty.

A little care and a few concessions would have saved her from the contempt and hatred of the fickle Parisians, who were ready to exaggerate every rumor that escaped from the exclusive circle of the court.

She lived in an age of immorality, in the most corrupt court of Europe, and was surrounded every day of her life by men whose whole purpose was to bring women under the sway of their gallantry.

She was wedded to an indifferent husband, a dolt, a dullard, whose blood was sluggish and who seemed to have no sentiment nor courage nor enthusiasm, a man who would have been unattractive to any woman of spirit. His indifference constantly put his wife in the way of temptation, and then when her character was assailed, because of

her foolish indiscretions, he had neither nerve nor temper to defend or correct her. He must have heard the rumors; he must have known how light and frivolous she was, how devoted to pleasure, how imprudent in her conduct and in the choice of her friends, both men and women.

It is unfair, however, to judge her by a rule we would apply to-day; we must consider her surroundings, her temptations, the corruption and frivolity of the court into which, at an early age, she was thrown. She had no strong hand to guide and control her, and she was married to a man whose amiability under the circumstances was worse than a vice.

But we must draw a veil over her vanity and her follies, for the time is coming when she will pay a dreadful penalty for all her indiscretions. The queen of the proudest court in Europe is destined soon to meet an untimely fate, and all her sins will be forgiven and forgotten when we see her mount the guillotine and go to her death with a spirit undaunted, but with a heart softened by adversity.

No matter what her extravagance had cost France, the account, at last, was balanced, when the amount paid for her burial was the beggarly sum of six dollars and twenty cents,—a small draft, indeed, on the treasury that she had helped to impoverish.

CHAPTER V

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN—BEAUMARCHAIS

The American Revolution exerted an influence that can hardly be estimated in effecting the diffusion of liberal political ideas throughout all France. There was something that specially appealed to the imagination of a Frenchman in the struggle of a brave people for their liberties against the tyranny and the oppression of a great empire, an empire, too, that was the natural enemy of France.

"The American War," says Alison in his History of the French Revolution, "was the great change which blew into a flame the embers of innovation. Such was the universal enthusiasm which seized upon France at its commencement that nobles of the highest rank, princes, dukes and marquises solicited with impatient zeal commissions in the regiments destined to aid the insurgents. The passion for republican institutions increased with the successes of the American war, and at length rose to such a height as to infect even the courtiers of the palace."

Another distinguished writer says: "The rulers of France, as if smitten with judicial blindness, plunged headlong into the American war. They encouraged the spirit of revolution. The event of

the war carried to its height the enthusiasm of speculative democrats."

It is impossible, of course, to estimate the influence exerted in the matter of the diffusion of popular ideas, by the presence of Franklin in France on the eve of the coming Revolution, but it must have been considerable. His arrival created the greatest enthusiasm among that sensation-loving people, and he inspired the greatest admiration for the ideal republic, which, they believed, had been established by him, across the seas, in the wilds of America. As the ambassador of the young republic he was most warmly and enthusiastically received. The door of every fashionable and literary *salon* was thrown open and his reception at court was most cordial. He was made a member of the learned and scientific societies of the kingdom. He was féted, feasted, and toasted, and his name became a household word throughout all France. "His name," says John Adams, "was familiar to government and people, to king and courtiers, nobility, clergy, and philosophers, as well as plebeians, to such a degree that there was scarcely a peasant or a citizen, a *valet de chambre*, a coachman, a footman, a lady's chambermaid, or a scullion in a kitchen, who was not familiar with it, and who did not consider him as a friend to humankind."

An admiration so generous must have increased the desire of the people for the establishment in France of such a republic as he represented and for the application to government of such principles as he stood for. He appealed to the lively imagination of an emotional people who were beginning

to feel the impulse of a change. He seemed like an old philosopher who had stepped out of the past possessed of the wisdom of Solon and the humanity of Socrates.

His writings were translated and found in the palace of the prince and in the hut of the ploughman, in the boudoir of the lady of fashion and in the garret of the seamstress. "Poor Richard's" sayings were as current as the coin of the realm.

Franklin's features betokened thought and his countenance was benign and kindly and spoke of his love for man. His fur cap, his heavy shoes, his iron-rimmed spectacles, his homely, rustic-brown suit, his long hair falling upon his shoulders, made his appearance striking and picturesque. He was a familiar figure on the streets of Paris, and wherever he went he received assurances of regard and respect. The great philosopher, Auguste Comte, in his enthusiastic admiration, declared that "if he had been living when Franklin was in Paris he would have followed him through the streets and kissed the hem of his homespun overcoat made by Deborah."

He stood in the eyes of the French people as the personification of liberty. They had all heard that he had not only snatched the lightning from heaven but the sceptre from tyrants. His presence in France unquestionably aided in the diffusion of liberal views and intensified the longings for equal rights under the law.

The whole nation espoused the cause of the young republic. Courtiers flocked to her standard and drew their swords in her defence; young men, am-

bitious of military glory, appealed to Franklin to secure them positions in the American army, that they might battle in the cause of a people's liberty.

No American ever exerted so great an influence in France, or was ever held in so affectionate a regard by the French people as Benjamin Franklin. When he died in 1790, and the sad news was announced in the Assembly, Mirabeau ascended the tribune and pronounced the following beautiful eulogium:

"Franklin is dead! Returned unto the bosom of the divinity is that genius which freed America and rayed forth upon Europe torrents of light.

"The sage whom the two worlds alike claim—the man for whom the history of science and the history of empires are disputing—held, beyond doubt, an elevated rank in the human species. For long enough have political cabinets notified the death of those who were only great in their funeral orations, for long enough has court etiquette proclaimed hypocritical mourning. Nations should only wear mourning for their benefactors. The representatives of nations ought only to recommend to their homage the heroes of humanity.

"The Congress has ordained in the fourteen states of the confederation a mourning of two months for the death of Franklin, and America is acquitting, at this very moment, that tribute of veneration for one of the fathers of her constitution. Would it not be worthy of us to join in that religious act, to participate in that homage rendered before the face of the universe, both to the rights of man and to the philosopher who has

the most contributed to extend their acknowledgment over all the world? Antiquity would have raised altars to that vast and powerful genius, who, for the advantage of mortals embracing in his aspirations heaven and the earth, knew how to tame tyrants and their thunderbolts. France, enlightened and free, owes at the least an expression of remembrance and regret for one of the greatest men that have ever aided philosophy and liberty.

"I propose that it be decreed that the National Assembly wears mourning during three days for Benjamin Franklin."

France never paid a greater honor to one not born within her borders.

The discussion of political rights, in the abstract, had long engaged the thinkers and philosophers, but at last the king himself had espoused the cause of a people battling against their sovereign for the establishment of a democracy. The French government furnished money, men, and munitions of war to aid rebellion in America; further than that it morally supported the efforts of a people who had defied their king, renounced their allegiance, and declared their independence. The republican enthusiasm inspired by the American war gave strength to revolutionary ideas and doctrines in France. One revolution, in a measure, was the sequence of the other.

France had aided in the creation of a free nation, why should she herself not be free? All classes of citizens were enthusiastic in their support of the American Revolution, and it became a fashion even among the silken courtiers to advo-

cate the rights of man and political equality. The dullest mind could easily see that if there was a reason for a revolution in America, there were a thousand reasons why there should be one in France.

The French Revolution was the breaking away from all moral, religious, and political restraint. It was a surrender to the hatred and passions of men, resulting from the tyranny of both church and state, from the insolence and exactions of the crown, the higher clergy, and the upper or privileged classes. It was personal in its opposition and vented its rage and spleen on individuals. It was not always controlled by the principles of humanity and civil liberty; for in its delirium it was a dethroning of God as well as king, an abandonment of faith and an opposition to authority of every kind and character.

On the other hand, the American Revolution was a battle for principles, for the securing of political freedom. It was a struggle waged with a clearly defined purpose to acquire liberty under the law and political equality. It appealed to the reason and the consciences of men and firmly relied on the protection of Divine Providence. It was not a contest of a wild and frenzied people urged by hate; it was not against men, but for principles. A revolution led and directed by Washington, Lee, Adams, Franklin, and Witherspoon, must necessarily have differed in its purposes and characteristics from one led and directed by Desmoulins, Danton, Marat, Hébert, and Robespierre.

We must admit, however, that the causes and conditions that provoked the struggles were not the

same in the two countries. It would have been impossible for any government to have imposed upon the Anglo-Saxon race a tyranny so insolent as that borne by the French nation.

France was ripe for a change. There never was a condition so favorable for a revolution or a land in which a revolution was a greater necessity, and when it gained momentum, it swept in its fury everything before it to destruction. In the language of a distinguished English essayist: "We deplore the outrages which accompany revolutions, but the more violent the outrages the more assured we feel that a revolution was necessary."

Beaumarchais played no unimportant part in hurrying along the events that were to focus in the Revolution.

He was the son of a reputable watchmaker of Paris and was early apprenticed to his father's trade. Through the invention of an improved watch escapement, he brought himself into public notice. His invention was pirated; he instituted proceedings to secure his claim, and the Academy of Sciences, to which the question was referred, decided in his favor.

He was given permission to try his invention on the watch of Madame de Pompadour, and soon afterwards succeeded in securing the honor of being designated "Watchmaker to the King."

He was a handsome young fellow, witty, clever, courageous, and ambitious. He was impudent and brooked no insolence from the curled and pampered darlings of the court. The story is told that a

BEAUMARCHAIS

From an engraving in the collection of William J. Latta, Esq.

young nobleman stopped him one day and asked him to examine his watch that seemed out of repair. Beaumarchais coolly remarked that he had been so long out of practice that he feared he would be unable to discover the cause of the trouble, and then taking the watch from the hands of the courtier, he let it slip through his fingers to the floor, where it was dashed to pieces. Turning on his heel, he said to the astonished courtier: "I told you I was out of practice."

He was an accomplished musician and charmed with his art the daughters of the king. He was requested to give them lessons on the harp, and through their influence he was given recognition in the society of the court.

He made a fortunate stroke by marrying a rich widow; her money enabled him to purchase an office which carried with it a title of nobility. He was taken into the confidence of the king, who sent him on a delicate mission to hunt and destroy pamphlets that lampooned the precious Du Barry, and sad to say even reflected upon her virtue. He was in after years employed in a like capacity by Louis XVI. to hunt up and burn up a scandalous publication that libeled Marie Antoinette. It was rumored that the book he was sent out to suppress, in this instance, had been written by himself.

When thirty-five years of age he became a dramatist, and his two comedies, "The Barber of Seville" and "The Marriage of Figaro," met with unprecedented success. He satirized the vices of the aristocracy, mercilessly ridiculed and exposed their follies. Nothing sacred in religion, politics

or social life was safe from his wit and satire. His plays were seditious and irreverent. He displayed in their true colors the hypocrisy and immorality of churchmen, the wickedness of polite society, and the corruption of the state.

Liaisons and seduction were represented as mere amusements in which the man who did not succeed in his purpose was a bungling fool. He sneered at marriage and laughed at the innocent modesty of pure womanhood. Deceived husbands were made a butt and faithless wives, if successful in their amours, were heroines. He held the mirror up, and polite society saw its true reflection. The outside world likewise failed not to see the deformed image.

If the purpose of satire be to reform, its real object, in this instance, was reached, in time. The satire did not work an immediate reformation, but sowed the seed that was to bring forth fruit in season.

Louis XVI., imagining that he saw something in "The Marriage of Figaro" that was unwholesome and dangerous, forbade its presentation. But Beaumarchais gave private readings of the play in select circles, and whetted the appetite of the courtiers for its presentation on the stage. The queen coaxed and wheedled the complacent Louis, until he gave his consent, both little dreaming that they were aiding in the final destruction of the monarchy and of their own throne.

On the first night of its presentation the crowd was so great that the doors of the theatre were forced, and in the scuffle and struggle for seats three

persons were smothered and crushed to death. It was as much as the guards could do to prevent a riot.

The king was informed that some lines of the play reflected upon him personally, and he had Beaumarchais consigned to prison; but the public clamored for the release of the author, and Louis, five days after the arrest, gave an order for his discharge. If the aristocracy had had any respect for itself it would have winced under the stripes of the satirist, but strange to say, instead of objecting, it encouraged the production of the plays,— Marie Antoinette herself, in the theatre at Trianon, assumed the character of *Rosina* in the "Barber of Seville." The cast was made up of nobles, men and women. An aristocratic audience laughed and jeered the monarchy to its ruin. The play brought contempt on the rotten system and aided in its final destruction. The laughter that the wit and the keen satire provoked was the death-knell of the *ancien régime.*

CHAPTER VI

FINANCIAL CONDITION IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF FRENCH REVOLUTION — TURGOT — NECKER — CALONNE—THE NOTABLES—LOMENIE DE BRIENNE—STATES GENERAL SUMMONED—NECKER RECALLED

The immediate causes of the Revolution were the disordered state of the finances, the misery, and the discontent of the people. A national bankruptcy was threatened, the classes were antagonistic to each other, the public mind was inflamed, the people were restless, dissatisfied, and bent upon having a change.

The king was willing, no doubt was anxious, to make reforms; in fact, in his own weak, characteristic way, he endeavored to act upon the suggestions made by his able minister; but he had not the moral courage to carry them out to a conclusion.

He was fortunate in having so able and so patriotic a minister as Turgot, but unfortunately Louis had neither sense nor wisdom enough to be always guided by his advice.

Malesherbes, in speaking of Turgot, said "he had the head of Bacon and the heart of L'Hopital." If this were so, it was truly a great combination of heart and mind.

The king often remarked: "I and Turgot are the only friends of the people." Who can estimate

the effect on the public mind of such a confession? It revealed in all its truth the opposition of the nobility to the interests and the welfare of the common people. The king unconsciously was arraying class against class. In his desire to show how he loved the people he taught them that the nobility were their enemies, and then he served the enemies of the people by removing Turgot, whom he had declared was the friend of the people.

The king should have more carefully measured the meaning and the effect of his words. There was, however, not much truth in what he said, for when the reforms were attempted and the privileged classes clamored for the dismissal of the minister, Louis, the self-styled friend of the people, soon yielded to their demands. He himself declared that the policy of Turgot was too radical, —to use his own language, "almost revolutionary." Even the mobs in Paris were aroused by the agents and the emissaries of the court to resist the reforms. Ignorant and debased, they were not able to understand and appreciate the purposes of a minister who was anxious to promote the public welfare and to do all in his power to relieve the disastrous and demoralized conditions that prevailed everywhere throughout the realm.

Among the reforms recommended and attempted by Turgot were the abolition of the iniquitous *corvée;* the removal of restraints upon industry; the wresting of trade from the monopolistic control of the guilds; the reduction and the equalization of taxation by compelling the clergy and the nobles to pay their proportionate share. He even suggested

the giving to the people a representation in the provincial assemblies and the calling of the States General. He was about the only Frenchman in official life of that period who advocated the doctrine of the American colonists, that there should be "no taxation without representation." His reform policy met with so determined an opposition that his fall could not be averted, and after his resignation a reaction set in immediately.

The privileged classes and the Farmers General rejoiced when Turgot was dismissed, but the thoughtful men of the nation stood aghast. Condorcet declared that all nature seemed changed in his eyes, and Voltaire wrote in a letter to La Harpe: "I see nothing but death before me. I cannot understand the purpose of the king in parting with so valuable a minister. It is a thunderbolt which has struck my brain and heart." Turgot was one of the wisest, one of the greatest, one of the most patriotic ministers that ever guided the destinies of France. His gradual reforms, if they could have been continued, might have saved the state from bankruptcy and averted the Revolution.

De Tocqueville says: "Experience teaches that the most dangerous moment for a bad government, ordinarily, is that when it begins to reform itself." This may not be true in all instances, but it was unquestionably so in the case of France. The evils to be corrected were so many and so grievous that an attempt to remedy any of them only revealed in a stronger light the wrongs that had so long been endured. This attempt by the government to reform created and aroused a determination in the

TURGOT

From an engraving in the collection of William J. Latta, Esq.

hearts of those who had suffered to effect a change in every direction. Once open the dykes and a deluge follows. A people, especially an ignorant people, until an intelligent effort be made to effect reforms, submits, endures and suffers, as if a change were out of the question, but when the government itself undertakes to correct abuses, for which abuses it is and has been responsible, it admits or concedes its errors and the people are thus taught that relief should be given. If the government fails to give the needed relief, its failure points the way to revolution.

Necker succeeded Turgot. He was a vain, self-confident man and greatly overrated as a financier. He was more of a banker than a statesman. He has been well defined as a high-typed charlatan. He had been a very capable and successful banker, but the conditions he was called upon to meet as minister were far beyond his power to direct or control. The task would have put to a severe test the ability of a much stronger man. He traced all the woes of France to the financial disorders rather than to the existing social and political conditions. He did not know the causes of the impending crisis; it appeared to him that the solution of the problem was only a matter of bookkeeping and economy in administration.

His principal reform was his "*Compte Rendu*," which was an account published showing the receipts and expenditures of the state. It revealed a condition of things that startled the people, exposed the monstrous extravagance of the court, and showed an enormous deficit which had been in-

creasing for years. The idea of the king taking an account of stock like a common tradesman and submitting his books to the public showing his personal expenses was, in the opinion of the nobility, a scandalous proceeding. The suggestion of such a plan, by a minister, was considered almost an act of treason, and Necker's deposition was but a matter of time.

This showing was made by Necker to induce capital to take the loans of the state, but the financial condition of the country was so much worse than it had been thought to be that the revelation of the truth produced a feeling of timidity and distrust. It aroused public opinion, and from every quarter came a demand for economy and reform. His attempt to reduce the expenses of the court aroused the anger of the nobility, who believed that the kingdom existed alone for their pleasure and advantage. They had influence enough with the king to cause his dismissal.

Necker was succeeded by Calonne, "the enchanter." He was also called "the model financier," and the "ladies' minister." He was witty and sanguine. His supreme assurance inspired for a time universal confidence. He fascinated and seduced the court; he smiled away their fears and with promises dispelled their doubts. How could there be anything wrong when the minister assured the country that there was no trouble? The court no longer dreaded the future,—it was safe under the directing wisdom of such a wizard. It is said that to all requests of Marie Antoinette he would reply: "Madame, if what your Majesty asks is

possible, it is already done; if impossible, it shall be done."

Under his administration prodigality again became a fashion. "Waste is the true alms-giving of kings." It was contended that the extravagance of the state put money into circulation, gave employment to the poor and aided in the prosperity of the country; but such a policy is as reckless and fallacious as its maxim is faulty.

Von Holst says "Calonne's maxim was: 'If you are in distress for money, do not noise it about, but spend lavishly; the public, believing that you have much, will readily lend you all you want.' It worked excellently well." One of the courtiers said: "I knew that Calonne would save the state, but I did not expect he would do it in the twinkling of an eye."

The deficit increased from year to year. In Necker's day it was well over fifty million francs. The best estimate Calonne could make in 1787 showed a deficit of one hundred and twenty-five million francs.

When Necker went into office he found twenty-eight millions of pensions. After his dismissal public money was again showered upon the favorites of the court. Calonne built palaces and inaugurated an era of public improvements. France, already bankrupted, assumed a business and a prosperous air. But such a policy was only adding woes to the state and increasing the miseries of the people. It was simply prolonging the agony without providing any efficient remedy to relieve the distress. The outgo was more than the income, and the

deficit was annually increasing. The final result was inevitable,—it could have been foretold by a child.

The Parliament of Paris differed in its organization not a whit from the Parliaments of other towns, but it claimed the right and exercised the power of taxing the nation. In 1786 Calonne asked the Parliament of Paris to register a loan. It complied with the request of the minister, but imposed restrictions as to the appropriations under the loan. The king waxed wroth and with his own royal right hand scratched out the restrictions. The minister, put to his wits' ends, now urged that a meeting of the Notables should be called. This was a body composed of the representatives of the privileged orders, which body had not been convened for one hundred and sixty years. It numbered one hundred and forty-four members, all named by the king. Princes of the blood, nobles, archbishops, bishops, councillors of state, the municipal officers of the large towns, and magistrates, composed this august assembly. It was not reasonable to suppose that such a body of men would enter enthusiastically upon a task that required a sacrifice of time-honored privileges. A few nobles like La Fayette favored reform, but they were overwhelmed by the majority.

The Notables, without providing any substantial relief, succeeded, however, in revealing to the nation the vicious mismanagement that characterized the financial administration of the country Calonne was now awake to the conditions, and to provide for immediate relief he boldly advised the

taxing of the lands of the nobility and the church; and to relieve the people from the burdens that were crushing them he suggested the reduction of the salt tax; and to encourage and revive trade he advocated the abolition of the interior custom houses. "Why, you are returning to the policy of Turgot," cried the king. "Yes, Sire," replied Calonne, "it is the only policy to adopt in such a crisis." The nobility, however, as usual, evinced no spirit of concession. In the face of the fact that the state was plunging into bankruptcy, the nobles would not agree to surrender any of their privileges, but turned with all their bitterness upon Calonne, demanding his dismissal. The king was easily persuaded to comply with their request, and Calonne stepped out of office into obscurity.

A public demand was made for the convening of the States General, an assembly in which not only the privileged classes would be represented but the entire body of the common people as well. This legislative body of the realm had not been convoked since 1640. It was an ancient body, Philip the Fair in the fourteenth century having first brought it into existence.

A few events, however, had to transpire first before Louis could be persuaded to summon it. Mirabeau declared that "when a king allows his subjects to perish from hunger or forces them to it, which is more atrocious still, it is to avow that he is not capable of governing them—it is to renounce the rights he exercises over them." What is to be done under such conditions, said Mirabeau, but to call upon and advise with the wisdom of the whole

nation by convoking the States General forthwith? Necker's recall was suggested, but the queen argued against such a move and persuaded Louis to name M. de Fonqueux, whose short administration was a blank failure. He was succeeded by Lomenie de Brienne, a churchman, whose ambition had long tempted him to intrigue for a place he had not the ability to fill.

Matters were growing worse from day to day. The nation was on the verge of revolution. For centuries France had been preparing for it and the point had been reached when there was a favorable concurrence of all circumstances and conditions internal and external. Misrule, unjust immunities, cruel exactions, famine, poverty, infidelity, class distinctions and privileges, together, combined to produce a convulsion that shook all Europe to its very centre. Even nature gave a helping hand to add to the general distress. A devastating hail-storm in the mid-summer of 1788 destroyed the crops ripe for the harvest in all the best corn-growing districts of the kingdom. This disaster was followed by a winter of unusual bitterness and the country folk swarmed to Paris, which was already over-crowded with her starving poor. She received this army of vagabonds and swallowed them up in her vaults, her cellars, her garrets, and in the recesses of her dingy, filthy tenements. Unable to obtain employment, they prowled through the streets, hungry and without hope, ready for any desperate enterprise. They were the advance guard. It was the beginning of the mobilization of the army of the Revolution. Events were has-

tening to a crisis. We now begin to sniff the smoke and the blood of the Revolution.

Matters had reached such a pass that immediate relief was a necessity, and the king was urged to call a meeting of the States General. The king consented. The calamity was general, and it was but proper that all interests should be considered, and the representatives of all classes advised with in order to provide for the public welfare.

De Brienne resigned and Necker was recalled.

In 1789, at the time of the convocation of the States General, the privileged classes numbered about two hundred and seventy thousand persons. Of these the nobility were one hundred and forty thousand, the clergy one hundred and thirty thousand, and from the latter must be taken sixty thousand curés and vicars, who are aptly described by Carlyle as "commons disguised in curate frocks;" two hundred and ten thousand persons out of a population of twenty-five million enjoyed all the immunities, privileges, and advantages that the state was able to provide and bestow. These figures show the disproportion that existed between the privileged few and the great body of the people, —a disproportion that was unfair, iniquitous, and dangerous.

> "The disproportion is so great, we cannot but
> Expect a fatal consequence."

The meeting of the States General marked the beginning of the end of the conditions that had so long existed and that had burdened France so

heavily. The absolutism of the crown and the privileges of the upper classes were to be swallowed up in the coming cataclysm.

The total number of deputies to the States General was twelve hundred and fourteen; one-half of this number came from the Third Estate, and of this half three hundred and seventy-four were lawyers.

All interest centred in this body of representative men of the people. All the hopes and fears of France were in the keeping of these deputies of the Third Estate.

Strange to say, it was the general belief that there were no questions that could not be easily solved, no troubles that could not be settled. To use the language of a writer of that period: "The body of the nation saw nothing more in the assembling of the States General than a means of diminishing the taxes, and the creditors of the state, so often deprived of their dividends by a violation of public faith, considered the States General as nothing more than a rampart against government bankruptcy."

The selection of Versailles as the place of meeting was not endorsed by popular approval. The people and their representatives preferred Paris, for it was contended that the congress, if it met in this city, would be further removed from the direct influences of the court.

CHAPTER VII

MEETING OF THE STATES GENERAL—MIRABEAU

On May 4, 1789, the States General paraded through Versailles, from the Church of Our Lady to the Church of St. Louis, where solemn high mass was celebrated, after which a sermon was preached by the Bishop of Nancy, who strongly denounced the unjust system of taxation and eloquently and pathetically described the miseries of the poor, among other things, saying: "They are martyrs in whom life is prolonged simply that their suffering may be longer endured." He ended his discourse by declaring that "all the wrongs were done in the name of the best of kings." The hall rang with enthusiastic applause, notwithstanding the sacred character of the place and the presence of the king and the queen.

"They were drunk with the desire to applaud," said Mirabeau, "and they applauded unto satiety."

The spirit of revolution was beginning to show itself in little things. Mere time-honored rules no longer controlled the actions of men. We shall soon see the deputies of the Third Estate defiantly remain covered in the presence of the king and thus assert their dignity and independence.

It was an ideal day in the sweetest month of all the year when the States General met at Versailles; the air was cool and the sky clear and deeply blue, the sun's rays warmed the atmosphere just enough

to make it delightful and invigorating. The flowers were blooming and fragrant and the grasses and foliage were freshly green. All nature was gloriously fair and vied with man in adding beauty and harmony to the occasion. But this harmony was in sheer mockery of what was yet to come. It gave no suggestion of the terrors that were to follow in its wake; it was the calm before the breaking of the storm.

Flags were flying from every window; the streets were hung with tapestries of inestimable value; inspiring music resounded on all sides and bells were ringing joyfully from every tower. Soldiers in gay and brilliant uniforms lined both sides of the avenue through which the procession passed. Every inch of available space was occupied; even the roofs were crowded with on-lookers. The windows and balconies were filled with fair women and brave men; all the beauty, wit and chivalry of France had gathered at Versailles, every eye sparkled with joy. It was a rapturous, an enchanting scene that beggars description; it was one of the most magnificent pageants that the world records.

Flowers and banners and music and pomp and glitter were on all sides. Enthusiasm was in the air, for all yet were loyal to the king; cheers and applause greeted the procession every step of its way. Behind this mask, however, were the ghastly features of death. Royalty, unawares, was marching to its grave; amidst all this sunshine and splendor, it was unconsciously hurrying to its doom.

The day following the scenes just described, the

States General met for the purpose of organization in the Salle des Menus at Versailles. It was a large hall capable of holding more than five thousand people. It had been specially adapted to the purposes of the meeting and no care nor expense had been spared in the matter of preparation. The preliminaries had been most carefully arranged, and the records of a prior meeting of the States General that was held in the reign of Philip le Bel were brought out of their dust and cobwebs and studied for the purpose of guiding and instructing in the all-important matters of form and etiquette; in fact, the questions of etiquette, formality, and precedence occupied the minds of the court and the masters of ceremony to the exclusion of more important matters. Those in charge of the arrangements totally forgot that the intervening centuries had wrought great changes, and, blind to existing conditions, they preferred to adhere strictly to ancient and time-honored precedent rather than yield to reason, concession and policy.

At a time when the popular mind should have been appeased and calmed, the court insisted that the members of the Third Estate should kneel when they presented their *cahiers* or petitions to the king, that they were to uncover in the presence of his Majesty, and that they were to enter the hall by a side door, while the nobles were to enter by the main gate-way. All these matters were thus decided upon, in the opinion of the Third Estate, for no purpose other than to remind the representatives of the people of their social and political inferiority, and, of course, this only further irritated the public

temper. There is a story told that illustrates this ruling passion for form and ceremony. It shows how strictly it was adhered to even when the Revolution threatened destruction to all class distinctions, to the throne itself. Roland, when Minister of the Interior, the first time he appeared at the chateau, had strings in his shoes and wore a round hat; his attire did not conform to the rules of etiquette. The master of ceremonies, M. Brézé, refused to admit him. Obliged, however, to yield, he said, despairingly, to Dumouriez, pointing to Roland, "Ah, sir, no buckles in his shoes!" "Ah, sir," replied Dumouriez, with a mock sympathetic air, "all is lost!" Such were the trifles that still occupied the attention of the court and its lackeys. A like story is told of the same Brézé when he was master of ceremonies during the Restoration, at the Court of Louis XVIII. The courtier had grown much older, but time in no wise had weakened his love of precise etiquette. One day a general was summoned hastily to the apartments of the king. He came to the palace wearing a colored cravat, which was considered entirely "out of form." Brézé, not knowing the general, refused to let him go in unless he made the necessary change, and to relieve the situation, Brézé suggested that he should borrow a white cravat from one of the soldiers of the guard near at hand. The affair was reaching a crisis when, fortunately, a court official, recognizing the general and soon understanding the trouble, took him by the arm and led him in to the king. Brézé, turning to a lady standing by, exclaimed: "Oh, Madame! that is

the way revolutions are made." This royal flunkey, from his point of view, no doubt thought the worst features of the great Revolution were the abolition of titles and the destruction of etiquette and ceremony.

And now everything was ready for the great event, greater by far than any one, even among the knowing ones, in all France, imagined.

The States General, at last, was in session. On a lofty dais, under a purple velvet canopy, spangled with golden *fleurs de lis*, stood the throne of the king. Louis was surrounded by his court, resplendent in their gorgeous robes; at his side sat his queen, supported by a retinue of princesses and ladies of the royal household, all superbly gowned and jewelled, while in the background stood the king's guard in dazzling uniforms.

In front of the dais, but lower down, were Necker and the ministers of the realm. On the right were the nobles of the church, who were no less magnificent in their surplices, mantle and robes than royalty itself. On the left were the nobility in their court costumes of black cloth, silk and gold cloaks, and wearing picturesque hats, turned up *à la* Henry IV., adorned with waving white plumes.

In front of the dais and further back in the hall sat the Third Estate in its plain garb. Its simple attire consisted of black cloth coat, waist-coat, and knee-breeches, a shoulder mantle of silk, white muslin cravat, and a hat cocked at three sides, which hat was yet to play a prominent part in setting at defiance, for the first time, an ancient rule

of etiquette, and thus giving notice, when the Third Estate stood covered in the presence of the king, that the old order of things was no longer in vogue. It was the first sign of real rebellion, for it was a step towards the settlement of the question of political equality. It revealed the true spirit of the people's deputies. At a time such as this, little things were of great consequence.

The galleries were crowded with the beauty and the intellect of France. Ladies attended by their gallants, men of letters and distinction, ambassadors from foreign states, and representatives from every quarter of the globe looked down upon this scene of dazzling splendor. It was a scheme of color that perhaps has never been equalled in the world's history,—all the hues on the palette of a Rubens could not depict on canvas its marvellous beauty.

The Third Estate, like a black cloud on the horizon, seemed amidst all this show and splendor to forebode disaster; it was suggestive, threatening, ominous. Its plain garb was in so marked a contrast to the resplendent costumes of the court, the nobility, and the hierarchy, that it seemed a badge of meanness, and the very contrast irritated the spirit of the proud deputies. At a time when the passions of the people should have been allayed by every possible means, the court appeared more determined than ever to impose upon the representatives of the people a distinguishing badge, to remind them of their social and political inferiority. "What is the Third Estate? Nothing. What should it be? Everything."

In the care of the six hundred deputies of the people rested the hopes and the liberties of France. In this sombre group were men who were destined to play an important and a most influential part in the coming drama.

Barnave, of philosophical temperament, of lofty, proud, and courageous spirit, watched with interest the passing events. No doubt, once in awhile, his eyes rested on the queen, but little could he read the future or guess what it had in store for both of them.

Bailly, the kind-hearted, pedantic astronomer, who had all his life been watching the stars, was not able to read the fate and destiny of his country. Little did he anticipate that the time would come when, as Mayor of Paris, he would chide the king.

Buzot, hopeful, sincere, patriotic, devoted to the popular cause, beloved of Madame Roland, was yet to be proscribed as a royalist and to be found stiff and stark in a field near Bordeaux, a victim of faction and anarchy, and food for famished dogs.

Rabaut Sainte Etienne was yet to arouse with his surpassing eloquence the National Assembly, and, in the end, pay the penalty for opposing the bloody triumvirate by ascending the scaffold.

Malouet, confident of the future, liberal in his views, in love with France, was to do battle for constitutional government and avoid death by fleeing to England.

Mounier, distinguished by his moderation and conservatism, saw, as the result of this Assembly, an end of the woes of the people and a future prosperity for his country, but, alas, his hopes were

destined to be only hopes, for, in time, he was to be hunted into exile and driven beyond the borders of the land he so dearly loved.

Robespierre, a young man about thirty, if so canting, so bilious a creature could ever be called young, was there as a deputy from Arras; a lawyer by profession, a theorist and a morbid sentimentalist by nature; an enigma, a demon of death, who could mourn, actually weep, over the loss of a pet pigeon; and yet, when the time came, could keep the guillotine busy chopping off the heads of friends as well as foes. He sat in the Assembly, watching with his squinting, snake-like eyes, the king, who in time was to be his victim.

The Abbe Siéyès, trained for the church, but better fitted for political intrigue, who had given a powerful impulse to the public mind when he asked, "What is the Third Estate?" was here to get an answer to his question.

Somewhere, no doubt, hidden away in the crowd, stood Marat, restless, eager, sinister, already scenting the blood of the aristocrats. Perhaps, too, could be seen the scarred face of Danton, as also the swarthy features of Camille Desmoulins, who was watching with interest the proceedings, little anticipating the part he was to play as "the first apostle of liberty" and "the attorney-general of the lamp-post."

Madame de Staël looked down from the gallery and affectionately watched her father while he tediously read a paper on the financial distresses of France, in which he showed a deficit of fifty-six million francs. Perhaps she was the only listener

MADAME DE STAEL

From an engraving in the collection of William J. Latta, Esq.

in that vast audience that attentively followed him, and she was controlled more by affection than interest, for, as Theirs says, "He wearied by his prolixity those whom he did not offend by his lessons."

Not once did Necker refer to the needs of constitutional reform. The whole tenor of his paper was the suggestion of methods by which more revenues could be secured for the payment or reduction of the public debt. This, of course, meant further taxation. It was the same old cry: "The king loves his starving people, but he needs and demands more tribute."

"Two ladies of rank, from a gallery, with very different feelings beheld the spectacle," writes Alison in his history of the French Revolution. "The one was Madame de Montmorin, wife of the minister of foreign affairs; the other the illustrious daughter of M. Necker, Madame de Staël. The latter exulted in the boundless prospect of national felicity, which seemed to be opening under the auspices of her father. 'You are wrong to rejoice,' said Madame de Montmorin; 'this event forebodes much misery to France and to ourselves.' Her presentiment turned out too well founded; she herself perished on the scaffold, with one of her sons; another was drowned; her husband was massacred in the prisons on September 2d; her eldest daughter was cut off in gaol; her youngest died of a broken heart before she had attained the age of thirty years."

All the actors in that great drama have passed away, a century of years has intervened, but the

interest in the proceedings and the deliberations of that meeting is unabated. It seems as fresh as ever.

Versailles presented a magnificent spectacle of a dying monarchy. The nobles and the courtiers, still fawning upon and flattering the king, were in time, in a short time, to abandon him to his fate, turn their backs on France, and ignominously fly across the border to find refuge in foreign courts and in strange lands.

All this glittering pageant was to vanish like a dream, and leave but a memory behind. King and queen, so resplendent in their robes and glory, were to be shorn of their power, deprived of their crowns, stripped of their titles, and abandoned by all their friends. Louis and Marie Capet were to ascend the scaffold to pay the penalty for the crimes of their ancestors and the wrongs of centuries.

There was one deputy to the States General whose coming was anxiously looked for. Mirabeau was patrician by birth, but, excluded from the ranks of the nobility, he found refuge among the deputies of the Third Estate. He towered in intellectual stature above all his colleagues. In that gathering there was not so great a man. His spirit was proud and lofty, his talents in some directions were sublime. When he entered the hall, all eyes were turned upon him, "but his look, his step awed the assembly. A bitter smile played on his lips, which were habitually contracted by an ironical and a scornful expression." His features, scarred by the ravages of disease, detracted nothing from his unique and commanding personality. His heavy shock of black hair resembled the mane of a

lion, while his piercing eyes flashed fire as he looked contemptuously, disdainfully towards the space occupied by the nobles. His air of defiance seemed to hurl a challenge at the foot of the throne. A friend of Mirabeau said it would be to his personal interest and advantage to assume a more conciliatory manner and added: "If you wish to be pardoned, you must ask pardon." Mirabeau, in a loud and an excited tone, replied: "I am come hither to be asked, not to ask pardon."

He was the most picturesque figure in the Assembly. His reputation, his wild career, his escapades, his vices, his imprisonments, his love affairs, his extravagance, his writings, his eloquence, his ability, were known throughout all France. The story of his life was an epic.

Madame de Staël, who saw him in the procession of Deputies on the way to say mass in the Church of St. Louis on the memorable 4th of May, writes: "Among these nobles who had been deputed to the Third Estate, above all others was the Comte de Mirabeau. The opinion men had of his genius was singularly augmented by the fear entertained of his immorality; and yet it was this very immorality which straitened the influence his astonishing faculties were to secure to him. You could not but look long at this man when once you had noticed him; his immense black head of hair distinguished him among them all; you would have said his force depended on it like that of Samson; his face borrowed new expression from its very ugliness; his whole person gave you the idea of an irregular power, but a power such as you would

figure in a Tribune of the people." She also saw him as he entered the hall of the States General on the 5th of May. "He was greeted," she says, "with a low murmur. He understood its meaning, but stepping along to his seat with lofty air, he seemed as if he were preparing thus to produce sufficient trouble in the kingdom to confound the distinctions of esteem as well as all others."

Another writer says: "Mirabeau attracted everybody's attention. His immense mass of hair, his lion-like head stamped with extreme ugliness, were astounding, almost frightful. Nobody could take his eyes off him. He indeed was visibly a man, and the others were but shadows. Scandalous, noisy, and courageous in vice, the world was full of the romance of his adventures, amours, and passions. He was about to grow young with France and throw aside his old stained cloak. He had seriously injured his constitution, but he still bore his enormous head erect, and his looks were full of audacity. Everybody seemed to forebode in him the loud, appalling voice of France."

It is remarkable the impression Mirabeau created upon all who saw him. His personality was so striking that the strongest men dwindled in comparison; in any assemblage he would have been the central figure. All the descriptions given of the man picture him as the very embodiment of force. He commanded attention because of the innate power that was in him. His spirit was defiant, his manner was authoritative, he stood ready to meet conditions and to hazard even life and liberty

in his opposition to tyranny. He had the courage and the audacity of the real revolutionist. It would have been immeasurably to the advantage of the royal cause if he had stood in the ranks of the nobles, but his talents would not have shone so conspicuously in defending the crown as in assailing it, and in advocating the rights of the people.

As he stood up and looked over the Assembly, his eyes fell upon the king burdened with robes and covered with the crown jewels, and turning to those near him, he said: "Behold the victim already adorned." Could any phrase have more aptly suited the occasion and have been more prophetic in its sense? "Mirabeau," says Madame de Staël, "knew everything and foresaw everything." And Malouet declared that "He (Mirabeau), perhaps alone, had from the beginning a clear conception of the course the revolution would run." Years before it came, he declared that "unless some very decisive change take place, Louis XVI. will be the last monarch who will sway the fate of France." At another time, he wrote: "Should a revolution or civil war break out in France, I tremble for the aristocratic portion of the realm; their chateaux will be reduced to ashes and their blood shed in torrents."

Did this man of prescience look out into the future and see the coming events, when he pointed to the king as the victim, or was he simply coining a phrase to pass current among the people, and to suggest to them what should be done if reforms were not effected? Even the king must be sacrificed, if necessary, to secure the rights of the people.

When we read the story of the French Revolution, we find it was a logical sequence of the events and conditions that preceded it. It was not the work of men, who, as leaders of thought, had devised a scheme to reform government, or to build a free state. It was not so much the result of men's efforts as of things, of conditions. We too are impressed with the fact that the actors, who attempted to direct it when it broke upon the nation, were, in the vast majority of instances, men of small capacity, with but little experience in public affairs, and who, as a rule, were mere dreamers, theorists, and sentimentalists, or else men whose only purpose was to destroy every vestige of the old order, without having the slightest idea of what they would or should put in its place. They had no real conception of what they wanted to establish, but, regardless of consequences, were bent on destroying and tearing down that which existed. In the forceful language of Burke: "They were the ablest architects of ruin that ever the world saw."

After the Revolution started, it swept on its way resistlessly and they were unable to control the creature of their own creation. The touch of a child may start an avalanche, but only God can direct its course.

"Each member of the Assembly," said Dumont, "thought himself equal to any undertaking; never were seen so many men congregated together who fancied themselves legislators, capable of repairing the faults of the past, finding a remedy for all the errors of the human mind, and securing the happi-

ness of future generations. Doubt of their powers never once found its way into their bosoms, and infallibility always presided over their decisions."

What the delegates lacked in experience they made up in sincerity. They were earnestly and patriotically devoted to the popular cause. They were imbued with the principles of the new philosophy and had the courage of their convictions. They were, however, like sailors afloat on an unknown sea without compass, helm, astrolabe, or quadrant, unable to take their bearings or their soundings. It is marvellous, however, when we contemplate the conditions that confronted them, what a remarkable voyage these reckless and inexperienced navigators made.

The meeting of the States General proved that the new doctrines of political equality taught by the philosophers had taken root. If such a meeting of the realm had been called in the reign of Louis XIV., its counsels would have been perfunctory and its conduct subservient; it would have been awed into subjection by force.

France was ready, in 1789, for revolution; conditions were ripe; all the causes and reasons culminated at that moment; its coming was inevitable, but now its force was irresistible.

Louis the Great died in 1715; the States General was convoked in 1789. Three-quarters of a century had been preparing for the event. It would have been impossible to have gathered such a class of men, so earnest and independent in spirit as the deputies of the Third Estate, twenty-five years before the States General of 1789 was convened.

The Revolution did produce many able men, but there were two of surpassing genius who rose, in magnificent intellectual proportions, above all their fellows. These were Mirabeau and Napoleon. "Both were of the kin of the demi-gods." They were born leaders of commanding force and intellect, but totally different in their characteristics and qualities of mind and heart. Mirabeau was about twenty years older than Napoleon; the former died too soon and the latter came on the scene too late to have their careers touch at any point. They never met, probably never saw each other, but a meeting between them would have been most interesting to have observed and recorded.

CHAPTER VIII

COMTE DE MIRABEAU—THE MIRABEAUS—BRUNO —JEAN ANTOINE—VICTOR

Gabriel Honoré Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau, was born at Bignon, near Nemours, on March 9, 1749. "Never since the world began was a stranger child born into it." The light of day welcomed him just forty years before the convocation of the States General. But in that period of time his life was so varied and checkered with events that it had every feature and phase of a thrilling romance. Love, passion, poverty, misery, crime, exile, imprisonment, and, at last, a glorious opportunity for the exercise of his great talents, made up the incidents of his wonderful and exciting career. We are almost induced to say that it was worth while to have a revolution if for no other reason than to furnish a theatre for the display of an intellectual power so magnificent, an oratory so commanding. "Of a genius," says Carlyle, "equal in strength to Napoleon's; but a much humaner genius, almost a poetic one. With wider sympathies of his own, he appeals far more persuasively to the sympathies of men."

"He was a man," writes Mignet, "who only waited the occasion to become great. At Rome, in the best days of the republic, he would have been a Gracchus; in its decline, a Catiline; under the Fronde, a Cardinal de Retz; and in the decrepitude

of a monarchy, when such a being could only find scope for his immense faculties in agitation, he became remarkable for the vehemence of his passions, and for their punishment,—a life passed in committing disorders, and suffering for them. This prodigious activity required employment; the Revolution provided it. Accustomed to the struggle against despotism, irritated by the contempt of a nobility who were inferior to him, and who excluded him from their body; clever, daring, eloquent, Mirabeau felt that the Revolution would be his work, and his life. He exactly corresponded to the chief wants of his time. His thought, his voice, his action, were those of a tribune. In perilous circumstances, his was the earnestness which carries away an assembly; in difficult discussions, the unanswerable sally which at once puts an end to them; with a word he prostrated ambition, silenced enmities, disconcerted rivalries. This powerful being, perfectly at his ease in the midst of agitation, now giving himself up to impetuosity, now to the familiarities of conscious strength, exercised a sort of sovereignty in the Assembly. He soon obtained immense popularity, which he retained to the last; and he whom, at his first entrance into the legislature, every eye shunned, was, at his death, received into the Pantheon, amidst the tears of the Assembly and of all France. Had it not been for the Revolution, Mirabeau would have failed in realizing his destiny, for it is not enough to be great; one must live at the fitting period."

The Mirabeaus were a wild, an untamable race, proud, audacious, and imperious, but they did not

have the blood in their veins that they claimed. Lamartine, in his history of the Girondists, writes: "The family was one of those which Florence had cast from her bosom in the stormy excesses of her liberty, and for which Dante reproaches his country in such bitter strains for her exiles and persecutions. The blood of Machiavel and the earthquake genius of the Italian republics were characteristics of all the individuals of this race. The proportions of their souls exceed the height of their destiny: vices, passions, virtues are all in excess." This language is eloquent and accurately descriptive of the characteristics of the family and, no doubt, would have suited the proud boast of the Riquettis, but it is not based on fact, in so far as their origin is concerned.

"They came from Florence," says Carlyle, "cast out of it in some Guelph-Ghibelline quarrel." Justin H. McCarthy, in commenting upon this last statement, says in his interesting history of the French Revolution: "Of the great house of Mirabeau, he (Carlyle) seems to have accepted implicitly the astonishing statements of the family and their yet more astonishing pretensions."

The story that they descended from the Arrighettis, noble exiles from Florence, who settled in Provence in the thirteenth century, is an idle boast, a mere fabrication, invented by an ingenious master in heraldry, who could most adroitly twist genealogical roots out of their natural courses and skilfully intertwine them one with another. He could graft a plebeian branch on a patrician trunk, for a sufficient consideration, and conceal from the eyes of the uninitiated all traces of the cutting and

jointure. The name of this swindling herald was Jean Baptiste l'Hermite de Soliers, and his services were secured by Thomas de Riquetti to trace the family line, that his son might be admitted into the order of the Knights of Malta.

The Arrighettis of Florence, though far removed from the Riquettis of Provence, in the matter of relationship and blood, were close enough phonetically, so far as their names were concerned, to serve the purposes of this rogue of a herald, and the fiction, pleasing the pride of the Mirabeaus, it was accepted by them as a verity, and one may well imagine how their anger would have been aroused if the slightest intimation had been made that the story was not true. No family had greater pride of birth and were more presumptuous and pretentious upon so small a claim and so dim an origin. It is the vice of monarchies that birth counts for so much in the measure of merit.

The boast of Victor, the father of the great tribune, that the world had been learning during five hundred years to tolerate the Mirabeaus, who were not as other men, was without any substantial foundation, so far as the length of the family line was concerned. The statement was made to show the antiquity of the lineage rather than to regret the vices or excuse the eccentricities of the Mirabeaus.

In a letter to the king from the dungeon of Vincennes, Mirabeau wrote: "I bear a distinguished name. It is almost five centuries since my family, driven from Italy by the fury of factions, were welcomed by your ancestors." The saying of the

great tribune, that the one blot on the family 'scutcheon was an intermarriage with the Medici, was in the same vein, but the records do not prove that there was any such cross in his line, nor any such corruption of the family blood. Bad as the Medici blood was, it would not have done much damage if it had mingled with that of the Mirabeaus. At the time the Medici were marrying into the families of kings and princes, the Riquettis were merchants and traders classed among the bourgeoisie in the south of France.

" Mirabeau," says Dumont, " frequently boasted of the exceptional qualities of his race, was proud even of their vices, and seemed to take pleasure in exaggerating them. He had a son five or six years old, whose mother I never knew. This poor boy was loved and neglected by his father. ' That child,' said Mirabeau by way of praise, ' has a very ferocious heart.' He thought that everything connected with the blood of a Mirabeau would needs be extraordinary. Finding the poor child very much neglected, I caressed and fondled him and was much surprised at seeing this ferocious little animal take my hands, not to bite, but to kiss them. He appeared to be of an amiable disposition, and might easily have been managed with a little affectionate care."

MM. Louis and Charles de Lomenie, in their most interesting work, " Les Mirabeau," make Jean Riquetti, who bought in 1570 the estate and castle of Mirabeau, a fief of the old Provençal family of Barras, the founder of the house. He was an enterprising merchant of Marseilles, who accumulated

a fortune trading in coral and in the manufacture of fine cloths or "scarlet stuffs." He made an advantageous alliance by marrying into an aristocratic family, and rose in the estimation of his fellow-citizens because of the capable manner in which he discharged the duties of a municipal office. He appears to have been a reputable, conservative, well-to-do citizen, whose success in life and elevation to public place did not turn his head.

In 1660 Thomas Riquetti had the honor and special distinction of entertaining in his house, at Marseilles, Louis XIV. His son, Honoré, was created in 1685 Marquis de Mirabeau. From this point, the family history is interesting to study because it reveals, generation after generation, the predominant characteristics of the race, passion and intellect, which ultimately found their culmination and full development in the subject of this sketch. Some were of wild, of untamed blood, who offended against all forms; others were affectionate, tender, and gentle. Notably among the latter was the one known as the bailli, the uncle of the great Mirabeau. "In his character," says Von Holst, "is much less base alloy than in that of any other member of the family. He is by far the most estimable and sympathetic of them all." The marquis, in writing to the Comte du Saillant in 1770, said: "I know my tempestuous race. I have seen the youth of the bailli who, during a period of four or five years, passed not more than four days of the year outside of a gaol, and so soon as released, he would indulge in brandy and assault all those whom he found in his way, till he was beaten

and carried to prison. But with all this, he had honor to excess, and those who knew him, promised my mother that some day he would be an excellent man. Notwithstanding this, nobody could arrest him in his wild career, but suddenly he reformed himself," and the whole tenor of his life was changed. " A more gallant, honest, amiable, and, indeed, sensible man," says Brougham, " it would be hard to find in any circle or in any situation of life,—brave to a fault, so as even to signalize himself in a country, an age, and a profession where the highest valor was epidemical."

The daughters of the house, in some instances, were as mad as the men and had all the vicious characteristics of the race. " The women," says Lamartine, " are all angelic or perverse,—the men sublime or depraved."

The first one of the family who attracted public attention was Bruno de Riquetti. He commanded a company of musketeers in the reign of Louis XIV. He was a hot-blooded, tempestuous sort of fellow, a very madcap. He was said by a relative " to have had as much wit as courage, but was mad, insolent, and vicious." Upon one occasion, he chastised an usher of the royal household and chased him into the very cabinet of the king. When his arrest in consequence was directed, he defied the order and swaggered into the royal presence to explain the trifling incident. His audacity pleased Louis, who forgave him, no doubt believing that such a madman had the spirit of a valiant soldier and that the clemency and generosity of the monarch would increase the loyalty and

devotion of the subject. The leniency, however, did not seem to be appreciated, for at another time when the court, in a spirit of flattery and adulation, was dedicating an equestrian statue to Louis in the Place des Victoires, Bruno, with supreme audacity and almost in a spirit of contempt, evidently not relishing the silly and pompous ceremony, and not having much regard for the soldierly qualities of Louis, saluted the statue of Henry IV., and then cried out: "Friends, we will salute this one,—he deserves it as well as another." A bold spirit had this wild Bruno.

Jean Antoine, Marquis de Mirabeau, he of "the silver stock," was one of the most interesting characters of his period. He was tall, as straight as a pine, and every inch a soldier. He was a choleric, a splenetic, an outspoken martinet, who quailed neither before man, devil, nor danger. He served with great distinction in many campaigns and was known as "the right arm" of the Duke of Vendome. He was a soldier of reckless valor and fought, at times, with almost unexampled bravery, if we are to believe the history of his life as written by his son. Although receiving special mention for conspicuous skill and courage on many a field, he for some reason or other failed of promotion. Perhaps, as one would say in the vulgar parlance of to-day, it was owing to the fact that he did not have "a pull at the front."

Vendome, upon one occasion, presented him to Louis XIV. and spoke of his valor in terms most complimentary, but the old soldier, with his usual candor and spleen and want of tact, cut off all

chance of promotion by telling the king that had he left his flag, come up to court and bribed some scarlet woman, he might have had his promotion and fewer wounds, for, in truth, it is said that this old colonel of "the silver stock" had between thirty and forty of such decorations, twenty-seven of which he had received in one battle in one hour.

After this remarkable interview, Vendome told his friend that hereafter he would present him to the enemy, but never to the king. The old colonel was wanting in the arts of the courtier and the politician, but he had all the sterling qualities of the soldier.

At Cassano, he was left on the field supposed to be dead, but as a last precaution, a faithful and devoted follower threw over his head a camp kettle,—a curious helmet or morion for an old warrior, but it bravely answered its purpose. Soldiers charged and horses galloped over his body, but, fortunately, after the battle he was found alive, and restored to health by what his biographer calls a miraculous operation. He had been shot in the neck, "a bullet struck him in the throat and cut asunder the jugular vein," but the hemorrhage was stopped in time and his life spared. The tendons and cords, however, were so weak that he was ever afterwards compelled to wear a silver stock to hold his proud and haughty head in position. "This Col d'Argent," in the language of Carlyle, "came alive again and holding his head up by means of a silver stock, walked this earth many long days with respectability, with fiery intrepidity and spleen, and did many other things;

among others, produced in dignified wedlock, Mirabeau, the Friend of Men, who again produced Mirabeau, the Swallower of Formulas."

John Anthony, after his many battles, while resting at Digne, met, wooed, and won a beautiful woman, Mademoiselle Francoise de Castellane Norante. She was rich and well born. He was forty-two, she was half his age. He evidently had a dread of mothers-in-law, for he insisted upon the stipulation, that after his marriage the grand old dame, the mother of his wife, should never cross the threshold of his home. The marriage turned out to be a happy one; whether or not it was owing to the special stipulation can only be guessed. It was not only a happy marriage, but a fruitful one. His wife bore him six children, five sons and one daughter; but three sons survived him.

The eldest of these sons was Victor Riquetti, Marquis de Mirabeau, the father of the Great Tribune, born at Perthius in 1715. He was educated under the severest régime. John Anthony controlled his children by fear. He kept them at a distance, familiarity was out of the question. There was never shown a sentiment of love, for that, in the opinion of "old silver stock," would have been a sign of weakness. He was determined his boys should not be milksops, and he trained them as if they were whelps. "Honor thy father," was the precept that governed in his household, but it never occurred to the parent that he should honor the child. He thought he owed to his offspring no duties other than maintenance and education, and in return required grave respect and implicit obedi-

ence. He was most severe in his judgment, and in holding a child to an accountability he neglected to take into account the fact that he had transmitted to him his bad as well as his good traits. He failed, like many other fathers, to remember that he was responsible for the child's creation, and that his passions were inherited by the child, perhaps to an intensified degree and with less power of resistance to temptation.

Victor received his early education at a Jesuit College either in Aix or Marseilles. At thirteen he entered the army and was attached to the regiment which his father had formerly commanded. In 1731 he was withdrawn from his regiment and sent to a military academy in Paris. Here he led a wild and riotous sort of life and secured a degree of liberty, somewhat unusual for a boy of his years, by suppressing a letter of instruction to the school authorities, addressed to them by his father.

He enjoyed a freedom that allowed him to indulge in all kinds of excesses, and apparently without the slightest restraint or discipline. The pleasures of the gay capital specially appealed to him and his wild nature led him into all sorts of escapades, but what he liked best of all was to visit the playhouse with his companions and interrupt the actors and irritate the audience.

"In the winter of 1731," says Willert, "a strange figure was often to be seen in the pit of Parisian theatres,—a boy of remarkable beauty, with clear-cut features, bold eyes, and hair streaming in long elf locks below his shoulders, the cross of a knight of Malta hanging over his tattered

clothes, who, with his wild companions, disturbed actors and audience by noisy disapprobation and tumultuous applause."

Leaving the footlights, where he mocked the players, we next find him at the stage door waiting, night after night, for a pretty actress, whose bright eyes had set fire to his boyish heart. "Of all the pretty women," says McCarthy, "whose names are preserved for us in the amorous chronicles of the day, few were prettier than the little Dangeville," and she it was that caught in her meshes the young rogue Victor, but alas! the old Colonel of "the silver stock" heard of the affair and straightway the ardent lover was ordered to join his regiment. The parting was full of tears and vows, but time and absence soon healed the broken, bleeding hearts. The actress was shortly afterwards won by a wealthy nobleman, whom, in time, she ruined, and Victor, hearing of her infidelity, declared he had dismissed all thought of her. Perhaps!

His army life did not improve his morals. He was exceptionally dissolute, even in that immoral age. In writing to a friend, he says: "Sensuality is the bane of my imagination. I shall dearly rue my follies and that licentiousness which has become my second nature." Is it not strange that he did not, in after years, forgive the hereditary vices of his son, or at least make some allowance for them?

In 1743, while he was in Paris, he made up his mind that he ought to marry an heiress, and his choice fell upon a woman whom he had never seen. He immediately opened negotiations for her hand, and, unfortunately for both of them, was success-

ful. Their married life was most unhappy. He described the twenty years he spent with her as twenty years of nephritic colic.

Marie Genevieve de Vassan, for that was the name of the lady, was, at the time of her marriage, an ignorant, half-educated, self-willed girl, with violent passions. She was vulgar in language and immodest in her conduct. Her father was a weak, silly man. Her mother had the taint of hereditary insanity, and had been confined in a madhouse before the birth of her daughter, and, in the language of her son-in-law, "she was the most irritable and irritating woman in the world." We must, however, take with a grain of salt all the statements made by him in reference to his wife's family. He was at all times in such matters a severe and often an unfair critic.

The marquis, at last, suggested a separation, but to this the marchioness gave a decided refusal. She was induced, however, to go to her mother, whose health was failing, and, during her absence, her husband discovered evidences of her dishonor and shame "over which an honorable man," to use his own language, "could not throw his cloak." When confronted with indisputable and overwhelming proofs of her guilt, she agreed to a separation, and promised, in consideration of the payment of an annual allowance, not to come to Paris. But her extravagance and passion for gambling soon exhausted her income and her creditors began to dun the husband. In settling her debts, he paid them out of her stipulated allowance. In consequence, he was charged with neglecting to provide

sufficient support for his wife and was threatened by her relatives with a suit at law for breach of contract. A scandal was imminent, and to avoid all further annoyance, he summarily settled the matter by securing a *lettre de cachet*, under which his wife was confined in a convent at Limoges.

Failing to find happiness in the companionship of his wife, he formed a connection, such as was common in those days, with a Madame de Pailly, a Swiss lady of wit, cleverness, and intelligence, and although the forms of propriety were observed, the example was none the less injurious and mischievous to his children, in the matter of their home-training and education.

These were the influences and conditions that surrounded the early years of Gabriel and which affected a nature that, though passionate and intemperate, was naturally affectionate, generous, and sympathetic, and specially susceptible to kind and tender treatment. Even his harsh and crabbed father, in referring to his disposition, said: "You cannot speak to him reproachfully, but his eyes, his lips, his color testify that all is giving way; on the other hand, the smallest word of tenderness will make him burst into tears, and he would fling himself into the fire for you."

The marquis was a man of fine intellect and a political economist of distinction. He was a disciple of François de Quesnay, one of the most eminent economists of the eighteenth century, and was the author of a famous work entitled, "L'Ami des Hommes; or, Traite de la Population," which appeared about 1755. It created a decided sensa-

tion, although its style has been described as "rugged, quaint, and tortuous." Brougham, in referring to the literary style of the marquis, says: "It is nearly the dullest and most formal and least readable in which a Frenchman's thoughts were ever conveyed," and yet when he left his pedantic, so-called philosophical form and indulged in letter-writing "his style is about the very best, the most lively, the most entertaining, which, for originality, raciness, force, felicity of diction, has scarcely a rival." He was the author of twenty-two works. Most of them were ephemeral in character and are not found to-day even as curiosities on the book-shelves of antiquaries. His principal works were: "The Friend of Men," to which we have already alluded; "Theory of Taxation," "Rural Philosophy," and the "Civil Education of a Prince." He was a constant contributor to journals and periodicals on the subject of agriculture, although his son at one time intimated that his father's practical knowledge on this important subject was so limited that he could not distinguish rye from wheat. "The Friend of Men" was a strange title for one so heartless and so unsympathetic as this old ruffian. He was the professed friend of men as well as women, but the enemy of his family. In theory he was a philanthropist, in practice a tyrant. A self-styled friend of humanity, he was a cruel master to those whom he should have loved. He championed the world and abused his own family. He professed an affection for mankind and vented his hatred on his own flesh and blood.

He wrote a paper on "*Lettres de Cachet*," in his earlier years, in which he denounced in scathing terms an arbitrary power which imprisoned, without hearing or form of trial, innocent men and women, who, in many instances, knew neither the accusers nor the offences for which they were imprisoned. His inconsistency is shown in that he obtained from the ministry, after the publication of this work, about fifty-four such letters for the imprisonment of his children and others against whom he had personal grievances.

In referring to this matter in a letter written to his brother, the bailli, he says: "Four days ago I met Monpezat, whom I have not seen for twenty years, and who, like an ass, drew upon himself a regular set-down. 'Is your action with Madame la Marquise finished?' he said to me. 'I have gained it,' I replied. 'And where is she?' 'In a convent.' 'And your son, where is he?' 'In a convent.' 'And your daughter in Provence?' 'In a convent.' 'Have you then contracted to people convents?' 'Yes, sir, and had you been my son, you should have been in one long enough since.'"

The reputation of the old marquis for securing *lettres de cachet* was known throughout all France, and his use of these royal warrants became a public scandal. Gabriel Honoré, at the instance of his father, after his release from the dungeon of Vincennes, requested Maurepas, the minister, to give him a *lettre* against his sister, Madame de Chabris, whose wild and shameful conduct had, in the opinion of her father, disgraced the name of Mira-

MARQUIS DE MIRABEAU

After a painting by Thérèse Boucher (1781)

beau. Maurepas, out of all patience, replied: "It is intolerable that there should be no end to the scandals in your family. The king will hear no more of them."

In 1760 the Marquis published his "Theorie de l'Impot," in which he attacked with all the vehemence of his nature the Farmers General, and the unjust and cruel system of taxation that prevailed throughout France. Because of this publication, he was arrested for libel and confined for about a week in the prison at Vincennes and then exiled to his estate at Bignon.

Carlyle describes him as "one of the most singular, sublime pedants that ever stepped the soil of France. For, withal, there is such genius in him, rich depth of character, indestructible cheerfulness and health, breaking out in spite of these divorce papers, like strong sunlight in thundery weather." It took a man of Carlyle's disposition to appreciate and admire the qualities of such a character.

Vauvenargues, in a letter to the marquis, told him that he was "fiery, spiteful, stormier, prouder, and more changeable than the sea, thirsting above all for pleasure, knowledge, and honors."

He was a man of irascible temper, unreasonable and inconsistent in his conduct, vain, eccentric, imperious, resentful, cruel, and tyrannical. To his eldest son, the subject of this sketch, he transmitted all his passion and his intellect, and the conceited old pedant, failing to admire his own qualities or excuse his own vices in another, took vengeance upon his own creation.

We have, at some length, described the father

and the mother of Gabriel Honoré Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau, because to understand him, it is necessary to know something of his parents. We cannot fairly judge him unless we study his antecedents, early education, and surroundings.

CHAPTER IX

MIRABEAU'S BIRTH—HIS YOUTH—SCHOOL DAYS —EARLY MANHOOD—HIS MARRIAGE

THE Mirabeau house at Bignon on the 9th of March in the year of our Lord 1749 was excited in expectation of the coming of an heir. The Marquis for the time being had ceased his fuming and fretting and was quietly but anxiously awaiting the happening of the event. There had been a son previously born, but he had died when he was three years of age; his death had resulted from drinking the contents of an inkhorn. The father's wish was for a male heir to sustain the honor of the family name. The news at last came out of the bed-chamber that a son had been born. His appearance had startled the nurse, and the doctor pronounced him a monster. His birth was prodigious; the child's head was so large that his mother's life was put in peril. The gossips whispered that he was born with a mouthful of teeth, and stranger still, he is said to have been tongue-tied. His father called him "enormous" and boasted of his size and "seemed to take a kind of pleasure in his great proportions." "Cluck, cluck, —in the name of all the gods, what prodigy is this I have hatched? Web-footed, broad-billed, which will run and drown itself if Mercy and the parent fowl prevent not!" is the language Carlyle puts into the mouth of the old marquis at the moment of the child's birth. This misshapen little monster that

so startled the nurse, amazed the doctor, frightened his father, and imperilled his mother's life, was yet to terrorize tyrants and aid in the regeneration of France.

When about three years of age, he was attacked by smallpox, and his mother, under the advice of some wiseacre in the neighborhood, applied a salve to his features which scarred his face and left marks deep and ugly which time and care and numerous remedies could never efface.

The Mirabeaus had been a race of handsome men, but the greatest of the line was to be "swart, prodigious, patched with foul moles and eye-offending marks." In after years, when as deputy in the National Assembly his fame had spread throughout France, a woman who was an enthusiastic admirer wrote to him and requested in her letter a description of his appearance. Seizing his quill, he wrote: "Dear Madame, imagine a tiger that has had the smallpox."

The father, because of the disfigurement of the boy's face, was inconsolable; he stormed and fumed in his own wild fashion, and instead of pitying the child, turned away from him with aversion. The mother, too, no doubt received her share of abuse and denunciation, for the old marquis spared no one in his unreasonable anger.

At the age of five Gabriel, while under the care of his tutor, M. Poisson, was told to write on whatever came into his head. The little fellow, his father said, in a letter written to the bailli dated November 29, 1754, wrote literally as follows:

"Monsieur Me, I beg that you will pay atten-

tion to your writing and not make blots in your copy. Pay attention to what you are doing; obey your father, your tutor and your mother; never contradict; no double dealing on the point of honor above all. Attack no one, except you are attacked yourself. Defend your country. Do not be unkind to the servants. Do not be familiar with them. Hide the faults of your neighbors, because you may want them to do the same for you." Rather a remarkable paper for a child so young.

The boy made marvellous progress in his studies, notwithstanding the harsh treatment he received. His father's moods were as variable as April weather. At one moment the child was encouraged, and the next moment denounced and scorned. As time ran on the father's dislike grew into a bitter, an implacable hatred that followed the boy through life like the curse of fate. He had the unyielding, indomitable spirit and the savage nature of his race and he stubbornly resented his father's cruelty, and yet it must be said to his credit that he always retained respect, if not love, for his stern and unreasonable parent.

At twelve, his father said of him: "There is a noble heart under the jacket of that bantling. He has a strange instinct of pride, but of a generous character. This little bit of a man is a bully in a flurry and would swallow the whole world before he is twelve years old."

At the age of fifteen he was sent to a school, or what we should rather call a corrective or reformatory institution. It was located in Paris and was under the direction of a taskmaster named Cho-

quard, " a stern man and one who knew when needful to punish severely." He was an abbé and had the reputation of maintaining an educational system so harsh in its methods and administration that the most insubordinate spirit could be broken to obedience under its discipline.

The boy was not allowed to bear his family name, but was registered in the institution, at his father's request, as Pierre Buffiere, a slight, an ignominy put upon him, that must have irritated his proud nature.

During this period he had so haughty an air that the Prince de Conti asked: " What would you do if I slapped your face?" He answered: " That question might have been embarrassing before the invention of pistols for two."

We may get some idea of the impression Mirabeau made upon his school-fellows by reading a letter sent by one of them, Lord Minto, to his brother Hugh, after meeting Mirabeau in London many years after their school-days had ended: " I was agreeably surprised by a visit from our old and persecuted school-fellow, Mirabeau. I found him as ardent a friend as I left him and as little altered as possible by twenty years of life, of which six have been consumed in prison and the rest in personal and domestic trouble. He is as overbearing in his conversation, as awkward in his graces, as ugly and as misshapen in face and person, as dirty in his dress, and withal as perfectly *suffisant* as we remember him twenty years ago at school. I loved him, however, then and so did you, though, as he confesses, you sometimes quarrelled with him,

being always somewhat less patient in admitting extreme pretensions than me."

While at Choquard's Academy the boy, because of his cheerfulness, aptitude, and intelligence, softened the heart of his merciless master. He acquired the use of four languages, danced gracefully, and rode a horse like a Cossack. A brighter pupil never sat at a desk. But the regimen of the school, severe as it was, did not tame his wild spirit, and so his father secured for him a commission in the army. Here he got into all sorts of scrapes and any number of quarrels; his temper was hot and hasty, and he kept his scabbard empty. Upon the slightest provocation he would draw his sword and he was most skilful in the use of it. Quarrels, duels, bouts, and orgies were daily and nightly incidents in his life. To make matters worse, he fell in love with a young lady, a policeman's daughter, whom his superior officer had endeavored to woo and win.

The cowardly rival quietly conveyed the information to the father of Mirabeau, and the old man, as usual, without looking into the facts, waxed wroth and threatened vengeance. The result was a quarrel, a flight to Paris, an arrest under a *lettre de cachet* and confinement in a dungeon on the Isle of Rhé. The father's letter of introduction to the governor of the prison described his son as "hot headed, utterly perverse and a liar by instinct." Handicapped in this way, he, nevertheless, in a short time, won the heart of his gaoler, who, becoming interested in his welfare, personally interceded for his pardon. After much entreaty and many promises, he was released and again joined a

regiment, which straightway sailed to Corsica to aid in the reduction of that insurgent island. For his brilliant and distinguished services in this campaign he was commissioned captain of dragoons, although not assigned to any particular command. His superior officer declared that he never saw a man who evinced a greater aptitude for the science of war.

Upon his return to France his father's heart, for a time, seemed softened and he welcomed his boy home with some show of affection and allowed him to resume the family name, for he had borne the pseudonym, Pierre Buffiere, ever since the day he had entered Choquard's Academy.

About this time his father, who was put to his wits' ends to restrain him, said: "He is a bottle that has been corked and corded for twenty-one years. If he is ever uncorked suddenly and without great care there will be a fine evaporation." His father called him "Whirlwind," and his uncle, the bailli, addressed him as "Monsieur le Comte de la Bourrasque" (Squall). "Rummage in his head, and you will find a library topsy turvy, a talent for dazzling by superficialities; he has swallowed all formulas and cannot substantiate."

While on a visit to his father in Provence, he met his uncle, the bailli de Mirabeau, who, though strongly prejudiced against his nephew, was singularly impressed with his power and talents, and emphatically declared to his brother, the marquis, that "If not worse than Nero, he will be better than Marcus Aurelius. . . . If he is not the cleverest imposter in the world, he will be the best material

THE BAILLI DE MIRABEAU
After a painting by Aved (1748)

to be found for pope, commander by sea and land, lord chancellor, or even agriculturist. You were something at twenty-two, but not half what he is." This was pretty positive language for the conceited old pedant to hear, especially from so worthy a critic, but it in no wise changed his conduct towards his son. In reply, he told the bailli that he must be on guard against the wiles of the rascal who, while winning his heart, would, if the opportunity occurred, steal his purse.

About this time, Gabriel went to Paris, where for two years he enjoyed the life of a man of the world and indulged in every species of dissipation. His prodigality, his extravagance surpassed all limits, for in the language of the old marquis, "he would squander in a week all the treasures of our Lady of Loretto." He formed there the friendship of the Duke of Chartres, and was the companion of a group of wild revellers.

When presented at court, the young Mirabeau bore himself haughtily. "He is as insinuating as I was shy," said his father; and when the marquis was told of his son's escapades in Paris, he remarked that "he was a wild bird that nested between four turrets." I wonder if the father recalled his own days of dissipation in the capital?

"The colt is hard to manage," exclaimed in despair the old marquis, and so to bridle him he decided that he should marry, and straightway he was directed to sue for the hand of Marie Emilie de Covet, an heiress. There was some opposition upon the part of the young man, but he soon felt the force of his father's will, and yielded. She was

the only daughter of the Marquis de Marignane, and was described in a letter written by Mirabeau's sister as "hideous and very short." This description, however, was not doing the young woman full justice, for although her face was rather ordinary she had fine eyes, fine hair, a pleasing smile, figure small but agreeable. She showed great sprightliness of mind, was delicate, lively, sportful. Her temper, when aroused, was violent. Her language, at times, was coarse, and her stories broad. She had a taste for music, was given to extravagance, and had a passion for gambling. This was a fine pair to yoke together under a stingy allowance!

Mirabeau wooed and, as usual, won. He was disappointed in the amount of the dowry she brought him, for her penurious father gave her a very small dot. Immediately, because of his extravagant habits, Mirabeau became involved in debt, which so enraged his father that the prodigal, under a *lettre de cachet*, was confined within the limits of the little drowsy town of Manosque. Here he lived with his wife and child upon an annual stipend of two hundred and fifty pounds. During this period of poverty and privation he wrote his essay on Despotism, a work "full of fire, rough vigor, and still worth reading."

Chafing under the yoke of his marriage as well as the restraint imposed by the order of exile, Mirabeau longed for change and excitement. Two little adventures add spice to the story. His wife was given to coquetry. She was one of those silly women who live on admiration and who accept attention

whenever, wherever, and by whomever given. She flirted with a Provençal dandy named Gassaud. The correspondence was discovered, Mirabeau flew into a rage, demanded satisfaction, a duel was threatened, but was avoided by the earnest appeals of the dandy's father. Peace was restored, and Mirabeau even went so far in his generosity as to beg the family of the young lady to whom Gassaud was affianced to forgive the derelict, and once more restore him to favor. All the country-side had heard of Chevalier Gassaud's peril, and because of his conduct his fiancée's family had decided to break off the engagement, upon which was depending a fine marriage settlement.

While Mirabeau was returning from his errand of mercy, he met on the king's highway a certain Baron de Villeneuve-Moans. An old score had to be settled, for the baron, upon a certain occasion in a public promenade, had insulted sister Chabris. The baron refused to fight, whereupon Mirabeau seized the whip out of the socket of the baron's gig and took satisfaction to the full. A complaint was lodged against Mirabeau and a *lettre de cachet* hurried him away to the Chateau d'If. A year later he was transferred by his father's orders to the Fortress of Joux in the mountains of the Jura. Here he met at Pontarlier, a small town a short distance from the castle, Sophie de Monnier, and at first sight it was love in earnest. It would have been far better for both Sophie and Gabriel if he had been confined more closely in the donjon, or if the limit of his parole had fallen about a mile short of the town of Pontarlier.

To a man with passions as strong and as consuming as Mirabeau's, it is difficult to distinguish between love and lust. Of course, love is not all reason, nor is it all emotion and passion, for if it be the latter it disappears as soon as emotion vanishes and passion subsides. There is no question, however, but that during this period Mirabeau's affection for Sophie was sincere and deep.

Mirabeau was constantly in love, but he could not truthfully be called a constant lover. Sophie de Monnier, for whom he suffered and to whom he ardently protested his undying love and poured out the affection of his soul, faded almost completely out of his mind and recollection in, comparatively, a very short time.

He loved the sex rather than a woman. As we read the story of his love affairs, we are convinced that he delighted in the excitement of the chase. He rejoiced in the pursuit rather than in the possession. His passion or, if you prefer to designate it, his love increased proportionately as its object was difficult to reach or attain. Rivals and stone walls only intensified the ardor of his desire. Perhaps, however, among men, this is not an exception to the general rule. "L'amour rendait la victoire plus difficile pour en augmenter le prix," writes Mirabeau in one of his letters to Sophie.

Mirabeau was conscious of the influence he had over women and he often wantonly exerted it in the sheer pride of his strength. He delighted to have the world hear of his amours and his conquests, for they added to his reputation and revealed an innate power in a man who, though ugly

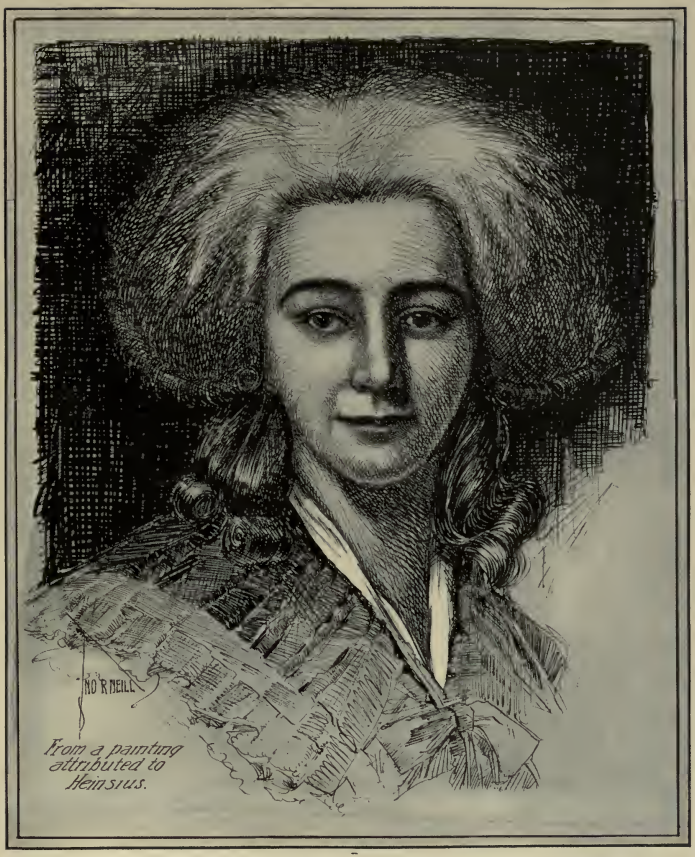
and scarred in visage, could fascinate the loveliest woman. He was proud of his reputation in these matters, and he could afford to be, for it was an age when commendation followed success; men were ridiculed for their blunders rather than denounced for their vices.

CHAPTER X

SOPHIE DE MONNIER—SEDUCTION OF SOPHIE—MIRABEAU IN PRISON AT VINCENNES—LETTERS TO SOPHIE — LETTRES DE CACHET — TRIAL AT PONTARLIER—SUIT AT AIX

Sophie de Monnier was just out of her teens when she married a man seventy-five years of age, "gray, old and sapless." He was a president of the Parliament of Besançon, a man of affluence, position and quality. The wealth of the aged suitor was too much of a temptation for the family of Sophie to resist, and she had to choose between a marriage and a convent. How much happier she would have been had she chosen the latter the story of her life will tell.

Mirabeau when at Joux had leave to extend his walk as far as the town of Pontarlier, and he was welcomed as a guest in the household of M. Monnier. It is unnecessary to say that he charmed all the inmates and specially fascinated the young and beautiful wife. But he had a rival more observant and jealous than the blind, confiding husband. The commandant of the fortress of Joux, almost as old as M. Monnier, whose love for women and attention to them had become a habit, and whose gallantry had outlived his passion, had more than once cast his eyes on Sophie, and the vain, conceited old soldier believed, before the arrival of Mirabeau, that the outer fortress had been taken.



SOPHIE DE MONNIER

He quietly wrote a complaining letter to Mirabeau's father, who, always ready to believe any ill report spoken of his son, gave orders to confine him more strictly and under closer guard. No plan could have been adopted that would have so inflamed the passions of the lovers and increased their longings.

Mirabeau, watching his opportunity, escaped the prison and fled to Switzerland. Hunted by the police and the emissaries of his implacable father, he managed to elude their vigilance. He succeeded in communicating with Sophie and arranged the plans for an elopement. In the darkness of a sultry August night she, in male attire, scaled the garden walls that surrounded her husband's home and hurried away to meet her lover at the nearest place on the Swiss frontier. Together they fled to Holland.

Here in the city of Amsterdam they lived in a humble tenement, a garret, some say, and suffered the stings of hunger and misery. He worked for Dutch publishers and toiled far into the night to earn a pittance for the bare necessaries of life. "Sophie sews and scours beside him with her soft fingers, not grudging it." But they were happy, and love made their burdens light. In referring to this period in one of his letters to Sophie, he says: "Study occupied nearly all my time, and a man who was double my age might have been less sedentary,—this thy love remembers. I had, at times, involuntary outbursts of vivacity and impatience, which thou mightst have taken for ill humor; but one of thy kisses ever restored serenity to my countenance and peace to my spirit.

. . . An hour of music delighted me, and my adorable companion, though nourished and bred in opulence, was never so gay, so courageous, so attentive, so affable, so tender, as in poverty,—her unchangeable warm-heartedness displayed itself to its utmost. We did not appear like an insensate couple whom a passing madness had driven from their country and indeed we were not such."

And Sophie writes, in answer: "Thou didst refuse my caresses for fear that they might make thee forget thy books; but with what rapture didst thou not return shortly,—with what transport did I not hold thee in my arms! How often didst thou not tear thyself from these arms to fly to thy labor, to thy tedious occupations; but nothing was wearisome to thee if it brought comfort to thy Sophie. Ah, dearest, truly thou wast the model of true lovers."

For eight months their happiness continued, and it might have lasted longer had it not been for the fact that Mirabeau, while divorce proceedings were pending between his parents, wrote a scathing, scurrilous pamphlet against his father, in which he held the vain old pedant up to public ridicule and contempt by describing him as a humbug, a hypocrite, and a tyrant. The lawsuit pending between the marquis and his wife was a wretched scandal and their impetuous son must needs take part in it, and having once before denounced his mother, he thought it his duty to balance the account by abusing his father. The pamphlets were shipped into France and the person to whom they were consigned kindly sent a copy to the marquis who, of

course, fumed and boiled with rage and straightway started in pursuit of his son.

The obdurate, implacable, relentless old man never gave up the hunt until his bloodhounds scented and ran down the quarry. It was all over with the lovers; they were discovered just as they were making preparations to escape to America. What would have been the trend of the French Revolution had Mirabeau been out of it?

Gabriel and Sophie were parted, vowing eternal love and fidelity. Tears and lamentations expressed the anguish of their hearts, for the future held no hope for them,—all was darkness and despair. Mirabeau was sent to the dungeon at Vincennes, and Sophie to an asylum for women in Paris.

After the abduction of Sophie her husband, M. Monnier, instituted formal proceedings against her and Mirabeau, and on the 10th of May, 1777, the tribunal of the bailiwick of Pontarlier decreed Mirabeau "guilty of abduction and seduction" and condemned him to be beheaded in effigy, to pay a fine of five livres to the state and forty thousand livres to the injured husband. Sophie was found guilty of being abducted and seduced and was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment in the House of Correction at Besançon, to be shaved and to forfeit all her rights and privileges of every kind, her marriage portion going to M. Monnier. St. Pelagie, a house for common prostitutes, had been selected for Sophie, but through the intercession of friends she was confined in a house of correction for respectable but "erratic ladies," kept by Mademoiselle Douay in the Rue de Charonne in Paris; she

was registered under the name of Madame de Courviere. While in this institution she won the affection of every one with whom she came in contact.

Mirabeau remained in the prison at Vincennes for forty-one months, from August, 1777, to December, 1780. It was in this dungeon that the seeds of death were sown in his body, for during his imprisonment he was frequently attacked by disease. His confinement at first was very severe. His cell was but ten feet square and was without a fireplace. He was allowed only one hour a day for exercise and fresh air. He was half fed and without a change of clothes for months at a time. In the meanwhile his child by his wife had died and also his daughter by Sophie. The old marquis, fearing that the name of Mirabeau might become extinct, consented to his son's release.

"Oh! there you are again," said the bailli to his brother the marquis, "with your posteromania (a longing for posterity), hard at work tutoring a game-cock of thirty-three! A nice task it is to undertake the rounding of a character that is only a hedgehog, all points and all too little body."

If it had not been for fear of the extinction of his line it is questionable whether or not "The Friend of Men" would ever have allowed his son to emerge from the dungeon.

Mirabeau surely gave no promise at this time of his future greatness. He emerged from the prison broken in body and with his sight greatly impaired. Notwithstanding the enormous strength of his constitution, further confinement, he said, would have

completely wrecked his health. "So, what Mirabeau was for his family in 1781," says Victor Hugo, "was an abortive man, a hackled creature, a fellow with whom nothing could be done, a head good to get broken by the insurgents and a scourge besides."

His imprisonment, however, was not without its benefits, for during its continuance he devoted his time to study; he was an omnivorous reader and devoured everything that fell into his hands. He was, unconsciously, preparing himself for the events that were coming on. Disgraced, imprisoned, his name a by-word, no one at this moment would have thought that in a decade of years he would direct the destinies of France, and that his death would be mourned by a sorrowing nation. His death in 1781 would have received hardly a passing notice, but "ten years later an immense crowd, gloomy, silent, profoundly sad, thronged the approaches of his house where he lay in his last agony."

After Mirabeau was released from his imprisonment at Vincennes, Sophie was given a greater degree of liberty and she was permitted to receive visitors in the convent. Among those whom she met was a certain M. de Rancourt, who perhaps was more attentive than he should have been under the circumstances. Mirabeau heard of these visits, and Sophie, in her correspondence, not making any reference to them, he became suspicious and jealous and wrote some severe letters complaining of her conduct. Instead of explaining matters she, in answer, upbraided him for his inattention and dere-

lictions, and thus only increased the anger of her old lover.

Mirabeau and Sophie met but once after their arrest in Holland, and the interview was had sometime after his release from Vincennes. Rumor, in the meanwhile, had been at work, and Mirabeau, jealous and unreasonable, would listen to no explanation, and for all time they parted, never again to meet on this earth, with anger in his heart and remorse in hers.

There were two principal reasons for this breach. In the first place, no doubt, Mirabeau's ardor had cooled. Time, absence, and baseless rumors had played havoc with his affections. In the second place, he was more anxious to secure kindly recognition from his father than to hold the love of his mistress.

He who had written in his dungeon that "time ought not to diminish love," he who had appealed to his mistress to be ever constant to her faithful Gabriel, declaring that he adored and would ever adore her,—forgot the meaning of those burning words. His treatment of Sophie was cruel, heartless, without excuse. For him she had sacrificed all that is dear to woman; her reputation, her honor, her virtue. She had abandoned home, friends and country; she had suffered poverty, exile and imprisonment, and her reward was the scorn and indifference of a lover whose ardor had cooled.

Sophie, after the final separation from Mirabeau, lived in a convent for several years. Her old husband, M. Monnier, died. With him she had never

been reconciled. For a long time she brooded over the rupture with Mirabeau, for in him all her real affection was centred. She afterwards, unfortunately, fell in love with a gentleman named de Poterat, who had suffered a disappointment in a love affair, and just on the eve of their marriage he died.

In 1789, in September of that year, the year in which the States General met and when Mirabeau's name was resounding throughout France, poor Sophie, tired of life, ended it by inhaling the fumes of a charcoal fire. She paid the full penalty of her sin. She had eaten her bitter bread in sorrow seasoned only with the salt of her tears. Pity and charity drew a veil over her one great indiscretion and left her alone to God's tender mercy.

The news of her death was brought to Mirabeau while he was in the Assembly. He rose and immediately left the hall; the shock, perhaps, revived for a time the spark that was concealed in the cold ashes of an almost forgotten love.

While at Vincennes, Mirabeau wrote his celebrated letters to Sophie. The superintendent of police, Lenoir, pitied the lovers and permitted them to write to each other under the condition that he should see their correspondence. The letters remained in the archives of the police until they were stolen by Manuel, Procureur of the Commune of Paris, and were published after Mirabeau's death in 1792, under the direction of the thief, who stated in the preface that "Il se felicité d'avoir été l'un des administrateurs de la police pour venger la memoire d'un grand homme. Sans moi ces lettres se

seraient séparées et perdues sous la main dedaigneuse des geoliers et des commis."

Mirabeau, fearing that they would be published, wrote in December, 1778: "Some monsters who infest the streets of Paris, whilst many honest men are groaning at Bicétre and in the galleys, threaten that they will print my correspondence and that of the unhappy victim of my love. This is dreadful to contemplate and if I survive it, it will be to avenge it."

Besides the letters that passed through the hands of Lenoir there was also a secret correspondence carried on between the lovers, the letters being conveyed by the turnkeys of the prison, whose hearts had been touched by Mirabeau's distress and whose palms had been tickled with his coin. Many of these letters came into the possession of Montigny, the adopted son of Mirabeau, who, after destroying a number of them, placed the remainder in the hands of M. de Lomenie. It is surprising that he did not see the propriety of consigning them all to the flames.

The mother and the creditors of Mirabeau endeavored to prevent the publication of the letters by Manuel, but lost the suit. They had an enormous sale. Garat paid them the homage of a serious, solemn criticism in his chair at the Lycée, and charged Mirabeau with gross plagiarism, declaring that he had copied whole passages from the novels and the periodicals of the day. "This correspondence," says Dumont, "evinced more of sensuality than sentiment. Many of his letters are so repugnant to modesty that they degrade the person to whom

they are addressed, for no man would presume to adopt so licentious a style in writing to a woman for whom he had the least esteem." La Harpe declared they revealed the real life of Mirabeau, and further added: "They are not memoirs written for the public, nor are they confessions; they are written in a dungeon to a mistress, and, passing through the hands of a judge, ought never to have been seen by others; and without the hazard of the Revolution, it is probable they would never have reached the light of day." Victor Hugo calls them "eloquent letters in which Mirabeau's real self is speaking, rather than writing." Carlyle says, "They are good letters of their kind, notwithstanding."

The letters were the outpourings of a heart amorous and sensuous; they expressed the longings of a lover who had been suddenly torn from his mistress and immured in a dungeon. In despair, at times without hope, he allows his passion to blind his reason. It seems impossible that he could have written, for instance, the letter dated in August, 1777, referring to a meeting in the house of Dame Barbaud at Pontarlier, especially in view of the fact that it was to pass under the eyes of a stranger. The letter of August 27, 1777, has very much the flavor of a celebrated letter written by Abelard to Heloise, and burns with passionate desire.

The correspondence becomes monotonous and at times nauseating. It is wanting in the expression of true esteem and lofty regard for pure womanhood. It displays no philosophical fortitude under

adversity. At times, like a wild beast, Mirabeau chafes against the bars of his cage and longs more for the body of his mistress than for her sympathy and companionship.

It was while lying in the dungeon at Vincennes that Mirabeau wrote his celebrated work, entitled "Inquiries concerning Lettres de Cachet and State Prisons," subjects with which he was very familiar because of his personal experiences. The work exhibited an accurate and a profound knowledge of the constitutional history of France. It proved, from the legal point of view, that the practice of issuing these letters was unwarranted, that the abuse had grown up without any authority of law, that it was an exercise of mere arbitrary power, and that from every humane and philosophical consideration, it was unjust and iniquitous. The work was characterized by his style, which was often diffuse, at times declamatory, but always eloquent. He wrote as one who had suffered and was suffering; he argued with the zeal and the enthusiasm of an advocate, but reasoned with the wisdom of a judge. The book created a great sensation throughout France, had an immense circulation, and was translated into English, with a dedication to the Duke of Norfolk, in the year 1788. It revealed the odious practice in its most hideous features and aroused among all classes the most violent opposition to its further continuance. It was not, however, until January, 1790, that the evil was formally abolished. In March of that year all prisoners confined under these summary processes were given their liberty. One can hardly imagine anything

more odious and unjust in the exercise of tyranny than the use of these sealed royal letters, by which men were arrested and committed without any form of trial or hearing, and without knowing their accusers, and without being informed of the nature and character of the charges.

Richelieu and Mazarin, during their administrations, frequently used these letters to suppress opposition and to dispose of their enemies. Parliaments protested, but in vain. It was too useful a method in the policy of tyrants to be abandoned.

Louis XIV. claimed the right to their use, as he declared, "for the public good and the interests of families." It was his custom to sign a number of these letters in blank and his ministers gave them to those persons who had sufficient influence to secure them. They were used, in many instances, to satisfy private hate and personal grievances. Fathers obtained them for the confinement of wayward and spendthrift sons; jealous lovers who wanted rivals out of the way found them very useful; faithless wives, that their amours might not be interfered with, disposed of their suspicious and inquisitive husbands by means of these infamous warrants. The husband of a pretty wife, who stood in the way of a courtier's desire, would suddenly be missed from his accustomed haunts, and the places that had known him would know him no more forever.

Arthur Young, in his interesting and thoughtful observations on the French Revolution, says: "They (*lettres de cachet*) were certainly carried to an excess hardly credible; to the length of being

sold, with blanks, to be filled up with names at the pleasure of the purchaser." To this statement he subjoins the following in a footnote: "An anecdote which I have from an authority to be depended on will explain the profligacy of government, in respect to these arbitrary imprisonments. Lord Albemarle, when ambassador to France, about the year 1753, calling one day on the minister for foreign affairs, was introduced for a few minutes into his cabinet while he finished a short conversation in the apartment in which he usually received those who conferred with him. As his lordship walked backwards and forwards in a very small room (a French cabinet is never a large one), he could not help seeing a paper lying on the table, written in a large, legible hand, and containing a list of the prisoners in the Bastile, in which the first name was Gordon. When the minister entered Lord Albemarle apologized for his involuntarily remarking the paper; the other replied that it was not of the least consequence, for they made no secret of the names. Lord A. then said that he had seen the name of Gordon first in the list, and he begged to know, as in all probability the person of this name was a British subject, on what account he had been put into the Bastile. The minister told him that he knew nothing of the matter, but would make the proper inquiries. The next time he saw Lord Albemarle he informed him that, on inquiring into the case of Gordon, he could find no person who could give him the least information; on which he had Gordon himself interrogated, who solemnly affirmed that he had not the smallest knowledge nor

even suspicion of the cause of his imprisonment, but that he had been confined thirty years; however, added the minister, I ordered him to be immediately released, and he is now at large. Such a case wants no comment."

To so great an extent had the evil grown that the virtuous Turgot and Malesherbes refused to take office under Louis XVI. unless it was agreed that they should not be required to countersign any letter without first being informed of its contents and purpose and the name of the person against whom it was directed.

After Mirabeau's release from Vincennes, he was controlled by an overweening desire to please and pacify his father, and this desire, strange to say, influenced his every thought and action. His affectionate regard for his father, under the circumstances, was most remarkable. In all his correspondence and publications at this time, there is not one harsh phrase recorded, with the exception of the remark made after his release from Vincennes, when he complained bitterly that his father hoped to starve him to death since he could not hope to make him rob on the highway.

And yet, from his very childhood, his father had slighted and tormented him, despised and denounced him, hunted and imprisoned him. He saw a younger brother caressed, favored, and rewarded,—a brother, too, whose qualities were mean in comparison with his, and yet, marvellous to relate, notwithstanding this treatment and these conditions, Mirabeau held his father in high regard and respect. He was honest enough to admit that his

father's treatment of him was justified by his wild conduct.

After his release from Vincennes, while he was visiting his brother-in-law, he saw hanging on the wall a portrait of his father. He stopped before it, and looking at it intently for a long time, tears came to his eyes, and he exclaimed, his voice choking with emotion: "My poor father!" and then passed on. Such an affection ought to have been early nurtured.

While Mirabeau was in the dungeon at Vincennes and when he had evidently given up all hope of release, he placed in the hands of his friend, M. Boucher, a sealed package containing letters, without date, addressed to Sophie, to his mother, his father, his brother, and to M. Lenoir. The destination of these letters was known to M. Boucher, but he was requested not to open the package until after Mirabeau's death. The letter to his father is couched in the most affectionate terms and reveals a forgiving disposition and a most contrite spirit:

"My father, when you receive this letter I shall be no more. The Supreme Judge will have either absolved or condemned me, but before appearing at His tribunal I feel it my duty to ask of you pardon for my faults, and it is from the depth of my heart that I bitterly regret the anxiety that they have given you. Efface from your memory these many errors of youth for which I have made some expiation by so many years of continual misfortune and of the most terrible captivity. But deign to believe that my sufferings have never driven

from my heart the sentiments of tenderness and respect which I owe to you. Yes, my father, although convinced that you have oppressed me, I swear to you, I have never thought, as you have published, nor complained against you, nor made myself a party in the divorce proceedings of my mother. The frankness with which I desire to express to you my thought at a time when I have no need of the assistance of any one, but only for the satisfaction of my conscience, ought to convince you of the truth of my protestations. I am far from wishing to recriminate, O, my father! against any one, whoever he may be. I write to you, on the contrary, with the conscience of a guilty man who accuses himself and demands mercy from his judge. Refuse me not then this last request, and if there remain a sentiment of pity for me, bear in mind that I leave in the world an unfortunate child, who in no wise is responsible for my faults, who carries your blood in her veins, and who has, I believe, no other support nor succor than that of your commiseration. Alas! I have caused the ruin of the mother,—is it necessary to reproach me with the misery of the daughter to whom the misfortune of her birth will count for so much, something for which she herself is in no way responsible? O, my father! I have no son, can you not have some regard for the little one that I leave behind? I dare to conceive a hope and it softens my regrets and my fears. These are the ardent aspirations of your son."

Surely here may be discovered a spirit of contrition; a heart without bitterness, rancor or hate.

Mirabeau, through the intercession of friends, was at last accorded an interview with his father, and a partial reconciliation was effected. In a letter to his brother, the bailli, the marquis gives the following description of the meeting: "Boucher and the family suddenly brought me Honoré, and as he knelt upon the ground, the chevalier (de Scepeaux) embraced me, saying, 'This is the prodigal son.' I said to Honoré, giving him my hand, that I had long since pardoned the enemy, that I was giving my hand to a friend, and that one day I hoped to be able to bless the son." He then described his son, whom he had not seen for years, as follows: "I have found him much stouter, especially about the shoulders, neck and head. He has our figure, construction and manner, except his own mercurial temperament; his locks are very beautiful, his eyes also, his forehead is open; he is much less studied in accent than formerly, but rather so yet, of a natural air otherwise and much less ruddy; beyond this, he is as you have seen him."

After Mirabeau's release from the castle of Vincennes he stood trial at Pontarlier under the charge of rape and seduction of Madame de Monnier and was acquitted in 1782.

The argument he made in his own defence was pronounced one of the ablest ever heard in the courts of France. By sheer force of intellect "he made the worse appear the better reason." He bore down all opposition before him. The very audacity, the sublime assurance and insolence of the advocate startled but dominated and persuaded the

minds of his judges. Having once been beheaded in effigy for his crime he secured, when he stood before his accusers in the flesh, not only an acquittal, but a marvellous personal triumph.

Turning from this great success, he hurried to Aix to plead for the return of his wife, but in this effort he was foiled. His ardor, his pathos, his fiery demands and tender appeals availed not, "his cause was untenable." Four out of the eight judges were near relatives of the Marquis of Marignane.

"On the day of the great spectacle the intoxicated crowd, although the guard had been trebled, occupied and smashed doors, barriers, windows, everything,—even on the roofs they sat, to see him, at least, if they could not hear him, and it is a pity that they did not all hear him, for he has spoken so much, howled so much, roared so much, that the mane of the lion was white with froth and the perspiration dripped from it."

Although defeated in his suit, he succeeded in establishing his reputation as the first orator of France. He was pitted against the leading advocates of the bar of Provence, a bar that stood exceptionally high. The ablest counsel had been retained by the Marignane family, and yet Mirabeau, not a trained lawyer, did not hesitate to enter the lists in advocacy of his own cause. During the trial he and his father were unjustly and most savagely assailed by Portalis, a leading advocate on the other side, and one of the most brilliant lawyers in France; but so intense, so impassioned was the language of Mirabeau in reply, so withering in its scorn, so vehement in denunciation, that

Portalis was carried "fainting and shattered" from the court-room. It is said, too, that Mirabeau's appeals, at times, were so pathetic that the Marquis de Marignane, the father of his wife, was overcome with emotion and wept.

Mirabeau's uncle, the bailli, was present at the trial, and in giving an account of the eloquence of his nephew, said: "The count pleaded yesterday; there was, as you would imagine, a crowd. Marignane was there; at the commencement he tittered, at the middle he bent his head,—they even assured me he finished by weeping, as did the greater half of the audience. Marignane, in going out, said, 'He has pleaded with much gentleness and moderation'; and in reality this man, made for desperate things, found the secret of administering lots of soft sawder to his father-in-law, to his wife, and to praise them much, although at the same time making them appear absurd."

The father of Mirabeau, with his usual acridity, referred to the magnificent effort of his son as the speech of "a chatterbox and a noodle" ("un claque-dents et un fol").

But all this eloquence and effort went for naught. Mirabeau lost his cause, his wife, and, worse than all for him, the control of her estate.

The story of the life of Mirabeau's wife is worth a passing notice. After the court decided in her favor at Aix, several attempts were made by friends to bring about a meeting and a reconciliation between her and her husband, but these efforts met with no success. After the death of Mirabeau she emigrated with her father to avoid the violence

of the Revolution and spent several years abroad in great poverty and distress. She married the Count of Rocca, an officer in the Sardinian army, and, in 1796, returned to France. The following year her husband died and she opened a correspondence with Mirabeau's sister, Madame du Saillant, whom she subsequently visited at Paris, and with whom she took up her residence in the Hotel Mirabeau. The remainder of her life she consecrated to the memory of her illustrious husband. She occupied his chamber, which she decorated with busts, portraits, and souvenirs of the great tribune, whom, in life, she had deceived and neglected. A silly woman, she doted on the memory of a man whose days she had embittered. She was proud of his marvellous career, and thought it reflected upon her, as his wife, some little glory. Her repentence was late,—it was not induced by love, but vanity.

CHAPTER XI

MADAME DE NEHRA—MIRABEAU'S WANDERINGS—HIS EXTRAVAGANCE—HIS ENERGY—HIS MANNER OF WORK—HIS BIOGRAPHERS

When Mirabeau's fortunes were at their lowest ebb he met a beautiful young woman who came into his life unexpectedly. She was the natural daughter of a Dutch gentleman and was living upon an annuity that had been left to her by her father. She had been educated in France, and was a woman of refinement and culture, and of a most philosophic turn of mind. Henriette Van Haren, or, as she was called, Madame de Nehra,—the latter name formed by a transposition of the letters in Haren,—had no relatives, and no conscientious scruples about forming an alliance with a man whom she could not take as husband. She says, in a feeble attempt to excuse her conduct, that she felt it her duty to sacrifice herself in order to save him. "I vowed to live for him alone, to follow him everywhere, to brave all, if I could be of use to him in good fortune or in bad. I sacrificed my quiet life to share the storms of his adventurous existence." She asserts that she was not blinded by passion, but was controlled by lofty sentiment. "When I first met him," she writes, "I thought his appearance most unpleasing; I started back with repulsion. But, like many

MADAME DE NEHRA

From an old print

others, I not only by degrees became accustomed to his features, I even came to think them well suited to his genius. His countenance was expressive, his mouth charming, his smile very attractive."

For five years the companionship continued, and during that period she exerted a remarkable influence over him. His letters to her are such as a man would have written to a woman for whom he had the highest regard. They are very unlike the correspondence with Sophie de Monnier.

"Dear love," he says, "I have had only one really happy day in my life, that on which I learned to know you, that on which you gave me your friendship. No happiness is possible away from you. . . . Were you to abandon me I might seek forgetfulness in dissipation, not to find pleasure, but death." After this solemn protestation he deserted her for the voluptuous, rascally Madame Le Jay.

Henriette de Nehra evidently was a woman who appealed more to his heart and mind than Sophie ever did, and yet from her own confession we are led to believe that their attachment was of a high type of friendship rather than love. She was won and fascinated by the intellectual power of Mirabeau, and she sacrificed herself out of mere sentiment. His infidelity gave her no special anxiety; her jealousy seems never to have been aroused so long as she had his confidence and esteem.

From this time forth he wandered through Europe, leading the life of a Bohemian, scarce finding a resting-place nor a fitting theatre for the dis-

play of his great talents and power. Occasionally he was plunged into gloom, as is evidenced by the following letter to his sister, in which he vividly describes his situation: "Behold me free! but what boots my liberty? Disavowed by my father; forgotten, and perhaps hated, by my mother, for having desired to serve her; dreaded by my uncle; haunted by my creditors, of whom not one has been paid, although they deprived me of everything, under the pretext of satisfying them; menaced by my wife, or by those who govern her; stripped of all things,—of revenue, of occupation, of credit." But out of this mood he, no doubt, soon emerged for he was sanguine in temperament and ever had the courage to face despair.

His extravagance plunged him into debt over head and heels. At times he was almost penniless and had to depend upon his wits for shelter and daily bread, but his spirit was unconquerable. What energy! what industry! what prodigious activity! What mighty projects filled his brain! He wrote, he argued, he thundered on every public question, and all France,—aye, the whole world,—listened. He wrote a letter to the king of Prussia, published an address to the Batavians, and even contemplated a translation of Homer. He published pamphlets on "The Prussian Monarchy," on "The Opening of the Scheldt," on "The Bank of St. Charles," on "The Order of Cincinnatus," on "The Diamond Necklace," on "The Water Company of Paris," on "Stock Jobbing," on Finance, Taxes, Constitutional Reform, the Administration of Justice. "He was a very thunderbolt of

labor and activity." Nothing escaped his disputatious ardor. "He was," using the language Macaulay applies to Johnson, "intellectually of the stuff of which controversialists are made." He was ever ready and always fully armed to enter the lists against all challengers.

He could write upon any subject at the shortest notice, and had the faculty of easily gathering his information from many sources. In his animated style, he could make the dryest subject interesting and absorbing.

Dumont, in his personal "Recollections of Mirabeau," says: "He had the art of finding out men of talent, and of successfully flattering those who could be of use to him. His interesting and animated conversation was like a hone which he used to sharpen his tools. Nothing was lost to him. . . . He appropriated to his own benefit the fruits of the reading and study of his friends, knew how to use the information thus acquired, so as to appear always to have possessed it, and when he had begun a work in earnest, it was seen to make a rapid and daily progress." Quoting from the same writer: "Had anyone offered him the elements of Chinese grammar he would, no doubt, have attempted a treatise on the Chinese language. He studied a subject whilst he was writing upon it, and he only required an assistant, who furnished matter. He could contrive to get notes and additions from twenty different hands; and had he been offered a good price, I am confident he would have undertaken to write even an encyclopædia." M. Etienne Dumont, who wrote the "Recollections of Mira-

beau," gives us more information that enables us to appreciate and better understand the real character of Mirabeau than any other author of that period.

He met Mirabeau in Paris in 1788, on the eve of the Revolution, in the house of Mr. Romilly, a gentleman whom Dumont describes as a "descendant of a French family, that took refuge in England after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; an event of which Romilly never spoke without blessing the memory of Louis XIV., to whom he thus owed the obligation of being an Englishman. During Mirabeau's visit to London, in 1784, he had become very intimate with Romilly."

It was at this time that Mirabeau became familiar with the strong features of the English constitution. He was specially impressed by the fact that the personal liberty of the humblest citizen was secured by law. "In general acts," he wrote, "the regal power seems boundless; in individual cases, as limited as any in Europe. Thus, it would be easier for the king to destroy the liberty of the press at one blow, or to load the entire country with an enormous impost, than to take a simple cottage from its rightful owner. The king can raise twenty millions of money, but he cannot cut off the head of John Wilkes."

Dumont was a citizen of Geneva. He had been educated for the church, but devoted much of his life to diplomacy and literature. He was in very close personal relations with Mirabeau, and assisted him in preparing his speeches and reports during the years 1789 and 1790. He went to England in

1792, and was secretary to Jeremy Bentham, and is said to have materially aided in compiling that author's great work "On Legislation." He had an abundance of conceit, and often writes in a vein that is most egotistical, but in so far as the facts relating to Mirabeau are concerned, he evidently did not draw upon his imagination. He had a great admiration for Mirabeau's talents and power, but his egotism would not permit him to overpaint any character but his own. Dumont took much credit to himself in the matter of the preparation of Mirabeau's speeches and at times speaks as if the great orator were merely his mouth-piece. He thought himself the little Vulcan who forged the thunderbolts for Zeus to hurl.

He, no doubt, gathered facts and put them into form and arrangement, but it required the genius of Mirabeau to give them life. Dumont's mere bald suggestions became under the eloquence of the master living things.

When the question was under discussion as to the name that should be taken by the Assembly, Dumont claims to have written a speech urging the adoption of the title, suggested by Mirabeau,—the "Assembly of the French People." He states that after the speech was written he gave it to Mirabeau who delivered it at a meeting of the Assembly. "The exordium which I had written," says Dumont, "excited a tolerable degree of attention,—the argumentative part passed off with alternate murmurs and applause,—but the peroration which he delivered in a voice of thunder, and which was heard with a species of terror, produced an

extraordinary effect. It was succeeded not by cries but by convulsions of rage." From reading this we might imagine that Mirabeau committed the speech to memory, but is it not more reasonable to believe that he merely took the suggestions of his secretary and clothed them in his own language? Would Dumont have us think that the great orator was but a declaimer? Further on in his book Dumont, in fact, answers the question by saying that "he (Mirabeau) imparted splendor to whatever he touched, by introducing here and there luminous thoughts, original expressions, and apostrophes full of fire and eloquence." Dumont was only a hodman and he thought in his conceit that he was the architect.

Carlyle, in speaking of this vanity of Dumont, says: "It is true the whim he had of looking at the great Mirabeau as a thing set in motion mainly by him, and such as he, was one of the most wonderful met with in psychology. . . . That in fact, figuratively speaking, this enormous Mirabeau, the sound of whom went forth to all lands, was no other than an enormous trumpet, or coach-horn of japanned tin, through which a dexterous little M. Dumont was blowing all the while and making the noise." Still, notwithstanding his personal weaknesses, his "Recollections of Mirabeau" is a most useful and interesting work. It was written in 1799, ten years after the meeting of the States General, at a time when the excitement of the Revolution had in a great measure subsided, and when thoughtful men were beginning to count the cost and weigh the results. It was written eight years

after the death of Mirabeau, when the incidents of his life, and when his power, influence, and personal traits and characteristics could be fairly judged, without personal prejudice or an overweening admiration. The interval was long enough to give a safe perspective.

Dumont was greatly impressed by the talents of Mirabeau, but his friendship was not so strong nor his admiration so great as to bias his judgment in the delineation of Mirabeau's character. The book is rather conservatively written, and the author was neither a sycophant nor a flatterer.

" His Mirabeau,," writes Macaulay, " is incomparable. All the former Mirabeaus were daubs in comparison. Some were merely painted from the imagination, others were gross caricatures; this is the very individual, neither god nor demon, but a man, a Frenchman,—a Frenchman of the eighteenth century, with great talents, with strong passions, depraved by bad education, surrounded by temptations of every kind, made desperate at one time by disgrace and then again intoxicated by fame. . . . Till now, Mirabeau was to us, and we believe to most readers of history, not a man, but a string of antitheses. Henceforth he will be a real human being, a remarkable and eccentric being indeed, but perfectly conceivable." High praise from such an authority, some will say, but it must be borne in mind that Macaulay was, in his criticisms and historical writings, apt to be controlled by his prejudices and emotions.

But even if we do not concede that the work is entitled to the high praise bestowed on it by Macau-

lay, we must admit that it faithfully portrays the great Mirabeau, and in the reading of it we get a fair and just conception of Mirabeau as he was. Without it we would have to depend upon stray sketches written by his contemporaries and the many histories of the Revolution, which, rather than delineating his character, connect him only with the events of that period.

To be sure the Biography written by M. Lucas Montigny, who styles himself "Adopted Son," is full of all sorts of information gathered from every conceivable source, but it gives no valuable personal recollections and impressions, for the author was not born until 1782, or thereabouts, and was only ten or eleven years of age when his father presumptive died. The work is heavy, uninteresting, and lengthy. The style is commonplace and the arrangement of the facts disordered. Montigny is so wanting in genius or talent that Carlyle says Mirabeau might have denied all responsibility of parentage upon this ground alone. Although not born in wedlock, he was, nevertheless, very proud of his father, and he played the part of a dutiful son in defending at every point, so far as was possible, the reputation of his sire.

I have gone to some length in commenting upon the works of Dumont and Montigny, because it is from these two authors, who personally knew him, that we gather much of our information as to the real character and the details of the life of Mirabeau.

MM. Louis and Charles de Lomenie have written the most exhaustive biography of the great tribune,

and have brought many new and interesting facts to light. The work was begun by Louis, who died before its completion. "It threatened to be one of the gravest losses in modern literature," says McCarthy, "that De Lomenie's book, like the unfinished window in Aladdin's Lamp, 'unfinished must remain.'" Fortunately, however, the materials left by Louis were subsequently put together by his son Charles and the work completed.

Von Holst admits that, taken altogether, this is the best biography of Mirabeau that has been written, but at the same time complains, and justly, that M. de Lomenie did not fully understand the character of Mirabeau, whom he calls "the inexplicable man." Von Holst says that the contradictions in the character of Mirabeau seem to perplex the biographer to such a degree that he fails to understand him in his true light; that men should be judged by taking into consideration the conditions of the period in which they live, that "they never can be really understood if they are not judged as children of their times;" that "if men and times are really understood, the moral guilt of their follies and crimes almost always appears diminished by one half." He further adds that he is far from charging M. de Lomenie with having overlooked this, but thinks he has not allowed it the weight that must be accorded to it. "Some historians might have hesitated to write and publish several stout volumes on a man so long as they had to confess to themselves that they failed to understand him."

"Das Leben Mirabeaus," published in 1889 by

Alfred Stern, a German professor, is pronounced by a competent authority as "the most complete, impartial, and interesting biography of the orator existing."

Von Holst is his latest biographer, and his work, says McCarthy, "The French Revolution tested by Mirabeau's Career," "is America's greatest contribution to the subject."

CHAPTER XII

NECKER AND CALONNE—MEETING OF NECKER AND MIRABEAU—MIRABEAU SEEKS SECRETARYSHIP OF THE NOTABLES—STANDS AS DEPUTY OF THIRD ESTATE—CAMPAIGN IN AIX AND MARSEILLES

EVENTS were following each other in rapid succession. The clouds were scudding before the storm. The Revolution was coming on apace, it was drawing close.

The acrimonious controversies between Calonne and Necker in relation to the deficit revealed a most startling condition of affairs. Mirabeau, who had been employed by Calonne in a diplomatic mission to Berlin, attacked Necker with all the fury of his nature. He threatened to expose the "charlatan" and lay him at Calonne's feet convicted of falsehood and incapacity.

Calonne had accused Necker of having imposed upon the nation by a statement that when he, Necker, retired from office, instead of leaving a deficiency there was a surplus of ten millions of livres. By calculations and specious arguments, Calonne created a doubt in the public mind which, for a time, seriously reflected upon the integrity of Necker. The latter, however, who seldom made a mistake in his figures or arithmetical calculations, soon refuted his enemies by a public contradiction. Mirabeau's shafts, this time, had gone wide of the mark.

Necker was nothing of a politician. He was loath to use the services of men in public affairs whom he would not invite to his home. He looked upon Mirabeau as an adventurer and a roué, whose confidence he could not secure, and whose services were not worth having. In this particular he was neither wise nor diplomatic, for Mirabeau could have rendered him great, invaluable service.

Malouet, at the opening of the States General, thought it would be a wise move to bring Necker and Mirabeau together and, accordingly, he arranged an interview. "I am told, sir," said Necker, when they met, "that you have some propositions to make to me; what are they?" The stiff and cold reception so nettled Mirabeau that he hotly replied: "My proposition, sir, is to wish you good-day." Hurrying back to the Assembly he told Malouet that Necker was an ass and that the minister would hear from him yet.

If a man wants to win in the game of politics, he must not be too particular about the private character of the men with whom he forms his combinations; he might as well consider the color of the hair or the cut of the coat. His purpose is to reach the end in view, and to do this he must use the material at hand. Necker was a dilettante in politics. He was not a good judge of human nature. He had an exalted opinion of his administrative and financial ability and an overweening supreme confidence in himself. Mirabeau sarcastically said that "Mallebranche saw everything in God, but Necker sees everything in Necker."

At this period, just on the eve of the Revolution,

" the character of Mirabeau," says Dumont, " was in the lowest possible state of degradation. He was considered as a dangerous enemy and a slippery friend. His lawsuits with his family, his elopements, his imprisonments, and his morals could not be overlooked, even in a city so lax as Paris; and his name was pronounced with detestation at the houses of some of our most intimate friends." No one could have imagined that this adventurer, living by his wits and reduced almost to beggary, to " a state of degradation," as Dumont puts it, was in a short time to be the foremost man in France, the most important political character of his period, and, as the leader of the National Assembly, was to direct the course of the Revolution. How opportunities are taken for destinies!

Prior to the calling of the meeting of the Notables, Mirabeau was in Berlin, but he hastened home to France to take part in the coming events. He clearly saw that the meeting of the Notables must, in turn, be followed almost immediately by the States General. "A convocation of the States General," he declared, " is so much required by necessity, so inevitable, that with or without a prime minister under Achilles or Thersites, it assuredly must take place." When the Notables met, in 1788, Mirabeau announced himself as a candidate for the secretaryship of the body, but the nobles refused even to consider his name in any connection.

On the 27th of December, 1788, the royal proclamation calls for a convocation of the States General to be held in May of the following year. The

whole nation is aroused; much is expected of this meeting; all classes are to be represented, and all the interests of the realm are to be considered. It is the ardent hope of every heart that relief will speedily come to an impoverished people, and a bankrupted state, as the result of the deliberations of the wise men of the kingdom. But alas! it was to provoke contention, strife, and terror; it was to open the flood-gates of passion and let in a sea of blood that was to lap at the foot of the throne, and at last swallow up all law and order and precedent, and in its fury sweep away, for a time at least, all landmarks and barriers of authority and government!

Mirabeau threw himself into the campaign with all the ardor of his nature. Here, at last, was an opportunity for the display of his great power and commanding talents.

He had been expecting the event and it arrived on time. "Assuredly," he writes in 1787, "I do not conceal from myself that I am attracted, that I am excited by circumstances which promise a glorious day for my country. Leave me then in my obscurity,—I say in my obscurity, because my design is to remain there invariably, until there follows, to the tumult wherein we now are, a regular order of things; and until some great revolution—be it good, or be it evil—commands a good citizen, always accountable for his vote, and even for his talents, to elevate his voice. That revolution cannot tarry."

At another time he declared: "I think Louis XV. was well-nigh correct when he stated that the

monarchy would endure his time and not much longer. Unless some very decisive change take place—which I will endeavor to bring about by writing and in every other practicable manner—Louis XVI. will be the last monarch who will sway the fate of France." When the States General was summoned in 1789, Mirabeau sought, as his father's proxy, to be elected a representative of the nobles, but they cast him out of their midst with imprecations. This aroused the lion in his nature and he swore to take revenge.

Rejected by the Noblesse, he appealed to the people and stood as deputy for the Third Estate in two towns, Marseilles and Aix. He harangued his constituents on the hustings and in pamphlets. He issued bulletins hourly. He travelled from place to place pleading his cause, and that of the people, with that fiery impassioned eloquence that was soon, in the National Assembly, to inflame all France. No political campaign of this kind had ever been seen. He made the first stump speeches that were ever heard in France,—"Provence crowding by the ten thousand round his chariot wheels; explosions of rejoicing musketry, heaven-rending acclamations; people paying two louis for a place at the window."

Every eye was on his district. All France turned to watch his battle. He was eager, restless, sleepless. Receptions were never more heartily given to any man than those to Mirabeau in the towns he visited during his campaign. Men, women, and children welcomed him. Their enthusiasm was so great that he exclaimed: "I see how men become

slaves,—tyranny is begun by gratitude." The crowd wished to draw his carriage but he objected, saying: "Men were not made to bear a man, and you already bear too much." Bonfires and illuminations reddened the skies night after night, and his progress through Provence was a march of triumph.

Bread-riots are threatening Marseilles; the governor requests him to address the people. He consents; he faces an angry, hungry mob, on the 25th of March, 1789, and in a speech, full of eloquence and logic, he explains to starving men why the government is powerless to aid them, and why they should not molest the baker and the butcher. "Listen to me, my good friends: I desire to be useful to you; I wish not to deceive you. Each of you wishes only that which is for the common good, because you are all honest men, but everyone does not know what he ought to do. We deceive ourselves, often even in the matter of our own interests; and it is because I have considered the interests of all, that I am going to tell you what I think." He then goes on to say that he knows they have just cause for many complaints, and it is to correct the things of which they complain that the good king has called a meeting at Versailles the 27th of next month, but they must not expect too much at once. "We cannot change immediately all that which should be changed; if we could we would not be men, we would be angels."

Having thus gained their confidence, he moves forward in his argument, step by step, explaining to them why wheat is dear, and, in consequence,

why bread is dear. He informs them that several of the countries that supply France with wheat are at war, and that the seasons had generally been very bad in all wheat-growing districts; that hail and storms had destroyed the harvests. "Elsewhere people suffer more than in Marseilles, and yet they suffer patiently and complain not. God has willed it; He will give us an abundance in another year." Patiently, adroitly, persuasively, the orator appealed to their minds and hearts; he aroused their local pride; he calmed their fears, allayed their suspicions, and, at last, softened their anger. Artillery would have provoked a riot; the eloquence of Mirabeau controlled the passions, appeased the hunger of men, and preserved the public peace.

The speech, from beginning to end, was a simple, gentle plea; it was not in his usual impetuous manner, and it proved that Mirabeau was a master in every style of oratory. In its class, the speech is a model to be carefully studied by every public speaker.

The story that Mirabeau, in order to find favor with the people, opened a cloth shop in Marseilles, is without the slightest foundation in truth. I have not been able to find where or how the story originated. In the "Biographie Moderne," however, it is seriously stated as a fact that, "being rejected at the time of the elections by the nobility of Provence, he hired a warehouse, put up this inscription, 'Mirabeau, woolen draper,' and was elected deputy from the *Tiers Etat* of Aix." He, no doubt, would have adopted any method to reach a

desired result, for, as a politician, he was not scrupulous in the choice of means to attain an end, but he did not have to gain the support of the Third Estate by such a plan. He was known in Provence as a patrician, and such a play would have simply subjected him to ridicule and would, in no way, have aided him in his ambition. When he espoused the popular cause, he was dubbed by the court the "Plebeian Count," and that sufficiently identified him with the Third Estate.

The opposition of the nobility to him was most bitter for what they termed the desertion of his class. He was most savagely attacked by all the royalist journals. A Paris paper called him "a mad dog." "If I am a mad dog," he replied, "that is an excellent reason to elect me, for despotism and privileges will die of my bite." How true!

Mirabeau was a practical politician, with all the arts and tricks of the modern school. He had great organizing ability, the faculty of winning men, versatility in the adaptation of means to an end, and a tireless spirit. No one could make more effective and picturesque plays to the gallery, no one could so thunder on the hustings, no one could write and publish more telling campaign "dodgers," or circulars, and in epigram frame more appropriate party shibboleths.

Over the signature of a "Citizen of Marseilles," letters were distributed during his campaign which extolled the talents and the virtues of the candidate. They strongly smack of Mirabeau's style, as will be seen in the following: "For fifteen years he has graven the principles of liberty and

equality,—the most sacred rights of man,—in monumental works destined to outlive bronze and copper. Provence was enslaved; the Count of Mirabeau appears, and she is free. He is the most eloquent man of the age. Public assemblies are swayed by his voice as the waves are hushed by the crash of the thunder. His courage is even more astounding than his ability. No power on earth could make him belie a single one of his principles. His public life has been a series of struggles and triumphs in the cause of truth." In the main, there is really no exaggeration in these statements.

His arraignment and defiance of the nobility, after he was driven from their ranks, was a piece of surpassing eloquence, and it alone would have placed him in the ranks of the people and among the leaders of the popular cause.

"What have I done that was so criminal? I have desired that my order were wise enough to give to-day what will unquestionably be wrested from it to-morrow; that it should receive the merit and the glory of sanctioning the assemblage of the Three Orders, which all Provence loudly demands. This is the crime of your 'enemy of peace!' Or, beyond that, I have ventured to believe that the people might be right after all. Ah, doubtless, a patrician soiled with such a thought deserves persecution! But I am still guiltier than you think; for it is my belief that the people when they complain are always right; that their indefatigable patience invariably waits the uttermost excesses of oppression before they can determine on resisting; that they never resist long enough to obtain com-

plete redress; and do not sufficiently know that to strike their enemies into terror and submission, they have only to stand still; that the most innocent as the most invincible of all powers is the power of refusing to act.

" But you, ministers of a God of peace, who are ordained to bless and not to curse, have launched your anathema on me without even the attempt at enlightening me, at reasoning with me!

" And you, ' friends of peace,' who denounce to the people, with all the vehemence of hatred, the one defender they yet have found, out of their own ranks;—who, to bring about concord, are filling capital and province with placards calculated to arm the rural districts against the towns, if your deeds did not refute your writings; who, to prepare ways of conciliation, protest against the royal regulation for convoking the States General, because it grants the people as many deputies as both the other orders, and against all that the coming National Assembly shall do, unless its laws secure the triumph of your pretensions, the eternity of your privileges! Disinterested ' friends of peace!' I have appealed to your honor, and summon you to state what expressions of mine have offended against either the respect we owe to the royal authority or to the nation's right. Nobles of Provence, Europe is attentive; weigh well your answer. Priests of the living God, beware; God hears you! And if you do not answer, but keep silence, shutting yourselves up in the vague declamations you have hurled at me, then allow me to add one word.

"In all countries, in all ages, aristocrats have implacably persecuted the friends of the people; and if, by some singular combination of fortune, there chanced to arise such a one in their own circle, it was he above all whom they struck at, eager to inspire wider terror by the choice of their victim. Thus perished the last of the Gracchi by the hands of the patricians; but, being struck with the mortal stab, he flung dust towards Heaven, and called on the avenging gods to witness; and from this dust sprang Marius,—Marius not so illustrious for exterminating the Cimbri as for overturning in Rome the tyranny of the Noblesse!

"But you, commons, listen to one who cherishes your plaudits in his heart, without being seduced by them. Man is only strong by union—he is only happy by peace. Be firm, but be not obstinate; courageous, but not tumultuous; free, but not undisciplined; sensitive, but not wildly enthusiastic; only stayed by insurmountable obstacles; and be always inflexible, but disdain the contentions of self-love, and never hesitate between your selfish interests and your country.

"As for me, in my public career I have only feared to be wrong,—begirt with an approving conscience and armed with principles I would brave the universe, if so be that my labors and my voice support you in the National Assembly. . . . What! should I now arrest my civic career? I who, the first of Frenchmen, have proudly proclaimed my opinions on the national affairs in a time when circumstances were less urgent and the task far more perilous! No; outrages will not influence my con-

stancy. I have been, I am, I will be to the tomb, the man of the public liberty,—the man of the constitution. Woe to the privileged orders! . . . for privileges shall perish; but the people is eternal."

CHAPTER XIII

DOUBLE REPRESENTATION FOR THIRD ESTATE—MIRABEAU DECIDES TO STAND FOR AIX—PARIS

France was awakening to a new life. The body politic was rotten and diseased. So long had the corruption lasted that it had become malignant and chronic. Further delay to apply remedies would have resulted in death. Hope now took the place of despair, the vital forces were quickened, and the people rose in their might to correct existing abuses. The right of franchise was accorded to every man who paid a tax, irrespective of the amount. It was a dangerous experiment thus suddenly to enfranchise an enslaved people, but the times required concessions and the people were not in the mood to submit to any restrictions of their rights.

The double representation, by which the Third Estate was entitled to as many deputies in the States General as the other two orders combined, was not so much a concession as a necessity. The times, public sentiment, the importance of the Third Estate, demanded an equal representation. It was on account of this representation that the privileged orders were afraid to meet in joint convention, especially in view of the fact that the Third Estate insisted upon voting by poll, upon all questions, instead of by order.

One of the reasons for Necker's popularity was that he had from the very beginning favored double

representation for the commons. He always, however, approached his conclusions by slow and cautious stages, and he endeavored first, in the Assembly of the Notables, to induce them to agree to his plan, but failing to secure their endorsement he afterwards declared for it openly.

Out of a population of twenty-five millions, five millions of men, it is said, voted at the elections. The court thought that the people would be tractable and that they would support those deputies who were favorable to the crown, but the court as usual was wrong. It is remarkable how unfamiliar the nobles were with the prevailing public sentiment. The Revolution seemed to creep upon them by degrees and they appeared never ready to resist it. They lacked leaders of foresight, resource, and courage. They failed to appreciate the impulse back of the people. They forgot that for generations the people had groaned under the weight of almost intolerable abuses, and that they were now in a temper, if the opportunity should occur, to wreak vengeance on their lords and masters in both church and state.

To return to the elections in Provence. Mirabeau was successful both in Marseilles and Aix, and he hesitated in deciding which district he would stand for. He finally selected the latter constituency. Many of the rich and influential citizens of Marseilles had opposed him, and in his effort to gain their favor, he lost in a considerable measure, because of his moderation, the support of the mob. The election returns from Marseilles showed a small majority and for this reason he decided to

stand for Aix, whose constituency had evinced greater confidence and had returned a far greater majority.

In relation to this matter, Dumont ascribes a different reason for his selection of the less important district. "Mirabeau," he says, "had employed manœuvres at Aix and at Marseilles which were to be brought forward against the legality of his return; and he himself felt so convinced that his election at Marseilles could never be maintained, that he gave the preference to Aix, although he would have been much more flattered at representing one of the largest and most important cities in the kingdom."

Deputies from all the districts in France were wending their way to the capital. At this period Paris was France. It was the capital of the State. The king held court here, or else at Versailles, a short distance away. It was the leading and most important city on the continent. No city of Europe presented contrasts so marked. Here were to be found, side by side, all classes of society, every phase of life, from the splendor of the prince to the misery of the beggar, from the luxury of the palace to the squalor of the hut.

The ambitious and distinguished men of the nation flocked to the city. Lawyers, journalists, financiers, statesmen, artists, and men of letters were attracted by the advantages and opportunities that the great metropolis offered and afforded. It was one of the most attractive cities in Europe; it was devoted to fashion and pleasure, and was the acknowledged literary and art centre of the world.

It was then, as it is to-day, the resort of travellers from all quarters of the globe.

In 1789 the population was the largest of all the cities of the continent. It was the centre of excitement and gaiety. Its principal thoroughfares were crowded with people—for Paris lived out of doors—going and coming in every direction, and not governed by any rule of locomotion, such as keeping to the right or to the left. Blind beggars were on every hand, pick-pockets and petty thieves mingled with the throng, and industriously plied their trade. Hawkers shrieked their wares in chorus, a discordant medley, making a din that deadened every other sound. There were no sidewalks for pedestrians. The highways were not paved, and in rainy weather they became thick with mud and black slime. Carriages, carts, fiacres, and vehicles of all kinds dashed rapidly through the streets,—for they travelled at a fast pace in Paris,—the drivers were regardless of any duty they owed to the life and limb of pedestrians.

Cafés were numerous; they were well patronized, and many of them were famous for their delicate dishes and fine service. The *salons* were a special feature of Parisian social life. They were literary, political, and fashionable. Necker's house was a centre of attraction. Here gathered men of letters, financiers, and distinguished politicians. La Fayette also kept open house, as did Madame Sabran and Madame Broglie; Barnave and the two Lameths were frequently at the latter's receptions. Madame de Beauharnais and Madame Talma won distinction as entertainers. The *salon* of Mademoiselle

Theroigne de Mericourt, a beautiful courtesan, the leader of the demi-monde, was frequented by men of the world, and there were to be found late at night, or rather early in the morning, many of the gentlemen who, in the early part of the evening, had spent their time in more respectable company. Mirabeau, when he could escape from the jealous scrutiny of Madame Le Jay, was an occasional visitor at this house of pleasure, and it is said that Robespierre dropped in at intervals.

Louvet, in describing Paris in 1783, wrote: "Arriving at the Place Louis XV., the spectacle which struck my eyes dazzled them with its magnificence. Upon the right bank of the Seine were extensive mansions, upon the left magnificent palaces, delightful walks behind me, and in front a noble garden. As we advanced I beheld the dwellings of kings. . . . My attention was attracted by new objects at every step. I admired the richness of the fashions, the gayety of the dress, and the elegance of the manners of those by whom it was surrounded." Upon his arrival in the city he had entered through the suburb of Saint Marceau, the twin district of Saint Antoine, in which districts lived the poor. Here he saw high but ugly cottages, filthy narrow streets, wretched men, women, and children, half naked, and on every hand dreadful misery. Having drawn a comparison between the rich and the poor districts, he said: "I could not understand how objects so different could be contained within the same circumference. Experience had not taught me that everywhere the palaces concealed the cottages; that

luxury produced misery; that the great opulence of a single person always implies the extreme poverty of many."

"Paris," wrote Morris, during the Revolution, "is perhaps as wicked a spot as exists. Incest, murder, bestiality, fraud, rapine, oppression, baseness, cruelty, and yet this is the city that has stepped forward in the sacred cause of liberty. The pressure of despotism being removed, every bad passion exerts its peculiar energy."

It was "the workshop of the Revolution." Here were forged the implements of that great conflict, here every effort focused, and from this throbbing centre was distributed throughout all France the force that gave impetus, thought, and direction to that mighty convulsion.

The centre of attraction in Paris was the Palais Royal. It had been thrown open to the public by the Duke of Orleans, and became the favorite resort for all classes of citizens. The palace surrounded an open court-yard. The ground floor was occupied with shops, cafés, and gambling hells. The newspaper offices were located here, and bulletins were posted hourly during the meetings of the States General. It was the ear, eye, and tongue of the city. Rumor and scandal from this point were given circulation. The gossip was never idle. It was crowded from morning until late at night with a noisy, an excited throng. Orators and demagogues harangued the dear people; the rostrum was seldom empty. Any man who had news to impart or desired to express his views on public questions was always given an attentive,

and, if he touched the popular chord, an enthusiastic audience. On the other hand, however, if his views were not in accord with the new order of things he would, most likely, be ducked unceremoniously in the fountain.

Saint Antoine was a quarter abandoned to the poor. It was frowned on by the Bastile, a dreadful gloomy fortress that stood like some great monitor posted to keep watch over that restless, turbulent population.

This whole section was a seething cauldron of revolution. Poverty, misery, destitution, and degradation were on every hand; employment was hard to find, food was scarce, garments were ragged. The mob, hungry and desperate, was kept in restraint by an armed force; but, at last, the barriers were broken down, and out of the depths of Saint Antoine poured the rabble with pike and scythe and torch to wreak vengeance on the authors of their misery, and the mob, when their turn came, were as deaf to the cries of mercy as the nobility had been to the appeals of the people for relief.

Saint Germaine was the aristocratic quarter, one of the most brilliant in Europe. Its life was fashionable and devoted to pleasure. Its *salons* were renowned the world over, but after the emigration of the nobles, who, like a pack of cowards, fled from the wrath of the people, it became a desert. Its palaces were abandoned and the quarter resembled the wealthy residential sections of our great cities during the summer exodus. Doors and windows were barred and grass grew in the streets.

A death-like stillness prevailed where all had been gaiety and splendor.

Even during the Reign of Terror there was no apparent change in the life of Paris. Business went on as usual; twenty-three theatres were open every night, and sixty dancing-saloons. The streets were thronged, the public gardens were crowded with merry-makers, the cafés and wine shops were open, but, strange to relate, the churches were closed.

Children daily went to school, and while playing in the streets would often stop their games to watch the passing tumbrils, or death carts, and mock the victims on their way to the scaffold. So common, so constant were the processions that the shop-keepers, if they were busy, did not take time to come to the doors to look at the condemned going to their doom.

The guillotine was surrounded day after day by an idle crowd of sightseers who laughed at the fears of the timid and howled down with derision the dying words of their one-time favorites. Children played around the scaffold and dabbled in the blood of its victims. Old women, knitting socks, sat in the shadow of the guillotine and kept score by dropping a stitch every time a head fell into the basket.

At the execution of the king, the crowd dipped their handkerchiefs in his blood, and one wretch threw a handful of the clots over the heads of the people. The king's coat and hat were torn to shreds, and distributed as relics, and when the basket fell from the cart, after the burial, people

rubbed their handkerchiefs over the bottom of it to preserve a smear of the royal blood.

At night the theatres and cafés were open. Howling maniacs and ferocious women danced in the roadways, and drunken, maddened sans-culottes reeled through the streets, celebrating the event in a public debauch; fierce Jacobins exulted; the radical clubs rang with the eloquence of the orators, and Danton cried out in his defiant, impassioned rage: "The allied kings of Europe threaten us! We hurl at their feet, as gage of battle, the head of a king."

CHAPTER XIV

STATES GENERAL IN SESSION—THE KING'S SPEECH —THE ORDERS—ATTEMPTED SUPPRESSION OF MIRABEAU'S PAPER—MIRABEAU'S FIRST TRIUMPH—COMMONS STEADFAST—ROBESPIERRE

The States General faced a future, foreboding, threatening disaster. No legislative assembly from the beginning of time ever met to consider more momentous questions, and it would be hard to find, in all history, a body of men called together to deliberate on public questions so lacking in political experience and training.

We have already described, somewhat in detail, upon another page, the ceremony and scenes incident to the opening of this historic congress.

The real business of the session began with the reading of the king's speech, which was characterized by a tender solicitude for the interests of the people and the welfare of the kingdom. It was conciliatory in tone and tender and affectionate in sentiment, but it defined no policy nor was it in any way suggestive of remedy for the existing evils. It was carefully prepared, so as not to offend the commons; but, on the other hand, it was careful not to intimate the surrender of any right or privilege of absolutism. There was to be no limitation of arbitrary power. It was just such a speech as was to be expected from such a monarch, who had not the slightest idea of the dangers that were imminent, nor any just conception of the conduct and

policy that were required by the necessities of the hour.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the day I have so anxiously expected has at last arrived, and I see around me the representatives of the nation which I glory in governing. A long interval has elapsed since the last session of the States General, and although the convocation of these assemblies seemed to have fallen into disuse, I did not hesitate to restore a custom from which the kingdom might derive new force, and which might open to the nation a new source of happiness. . . . That a happy spirit of union may pervade this assembly, and that this may be an ever-memorable epoch for the happiness and prosperity of the kingdom, is the wish of my heart, the most ardent of my desires,—it is, in a word, the reward which I expect for the uprightness of my intentions and the love I have for my subjects."

You will see that the king expects the thanks and congratulations of the people for having deigned to convoke the States General, and for having restored a wise custom that had fallen into disuse. He had placed the commons under obligations for having so kindly favored them. His pressing need was money, his dread was innovations.

The hall rang with applause at the conclusion of the king's address, and then Necker followed with his empty periods in a written speech that took him three long hours to deliver, wearing out the patience of his audience, and evading, at every point, the real issues other than the question of the budget.

Mirabeau, who had supreme contempt for the abilities of Necker, was disgusted with what he considered a lost opportunity, for from the very beginning to the end of an almost interminable speech there were no suggestions that gave hope, nor remedies that promised relief. "If the man had a vestige of talent," wrote Mirabeau, in a letter to a friend, "he could in a week obtain from us new taxes to the amount of sixty million livres, a loan of one hundred and fifty million, and dismiss us the next day. If he had any strength of character, he could play the part of Richelieu. If there was a spark of capacity among his advisers the king would declare himself on the side of the commons."

If a far-sighted statesman, instead of a mere financier, could have taken the helm at this time, the disasters that threatened to engulf the state, no doubt, could have been avoided. Concessions could have been made, the commons conciliated, reforms effected, and a constitution established. The Revolution might have been bloodless. Mirabeau felt he had the power within him to effect these results, and he chafed as he listened to the weary calculations of a book-keeper who usurped the place of a politician and statesman.

During the applause that followed Necker's address, for it was applauded notwithstanding its prolixity, the king hastily withdrew from the hall, having been warned that Mirabeau was to make himself "the mouthpiece of the nation's wishes." The nobility and the clergy immediately followed the king, and the deputies of the Third Estate were

left alone in that vast hall, which, before the departure of the king and the privileged orders, had been a scene of magnificence and splendor. Without leadership or organization, the deputies lingered around for awhile and then gradually melted away. The first day's session of the States General was over.

Mirabeau afterwards, in describing the five hundred deputies who were left in the hall after the adjournment of the session, said: "They were unknown to each other, they had gathered from all parts of the kingdom, all free, all equal, none with any authority, none feeling himself under any obligation to obey, and all, like Frenchmen, wishing to be heard before they would listen."

They were given, however, in the early sessions when they met alone an opportunity to measure the qualities of those men who were to lead them, to become acquainted with each other, to learn each others' names, and to interchange views upon the important questions of the day. They, at this time, were united in sentiment if not in purpose. They had not yet broken into clubs, factions, and parties. A common misery had brought them together; a common danger had united them, and in defence of individual safety they were dependent upon each other, and felt that sentiment of affection that the necessity of mutual protection creates.

The days of ceremony were over, and at once began the real business of the session. The sixth of May dawned clear and bright. It was auspicious of harmony, but it was a fruitless promise. The

nobility and the clergy repaired to their respective chambers. The deputies of the Third Estate gathered in the *Salle des Menus* and there awaited the arrival of the other orders. The conflict was begun in earnest. It was a contest of obstinacy. If the king at this juncture had insisted upon the union of the orders, the history of the Revolution might have been a different story. It would have been a wise move on the part of Louis, but with him wisdom came always too late. The deputies at this time were tractable, they were loyal to the king and desired the public welfare. They had no clearly defined purpose of campaign, but they would have insisted upon constitutional reform, a restriction of the king's veto, the removal of unjust exactions, the abolition of feudal burdens, and an equal distribution of taxation, and surely under the prevailing conditions they were entitled to these benefits. If these concessions had been made they undoubtedly would have favored a loan, under a just system of taxation, that would have relieved the public exigencies. But tyranny long entrenched is loath to yield any of its privileges, no matter how unjust or oppressive they may be. "It is rare to find a prince willing to share his power, or sufficiently enlightened to yield what he will be reduced to lose."

If Louis, at this juncture, had selected Mirabeau as his minister, he would, perhaps, not have lost his crown. Of course, under the circumstances, it would hardly be reasonable to suppose that the king could have placed, at that time, his confidence in a man with such a reputation, nor would such a choice have met with public approbation, for Mira-

beau's character was at a low ebb, and his real power had not yet been tested,—it was an unknown quantity; but if the king could have chosen him, it would have been a wise selection, for it goes without saying that Mirabeau was the one man above all others in the kingdom who possessed great statesmanship, united with marvellous political insight. He was a patrician by birth and sentiment, and believed in the monarchy, but, on the other hand, he appreciated the fact that the time had come when its power had to be tempered, and when concessions had to be made to popular demands.

The deputies of the people patiently waited in their place of meeting for the representatives of the privileged classes to join them. The latter, however, insisted that the three orders must advise separately, while the commons urged that they should meet and act together. It was further contended by the nobility that the voting should be by order, whereas the Third Estate insisted upon voting by poll. These were important questions, and upon their proper decision depended the future influence of the Third Estate in moulding legislation and in effecting the needed reforms. It was a wise policy that the Third Estate adopted and it was one to which they persistently adhered. Its adoption by all the orders would have given the commons a preponderance in the Assembly, and it was this that the crown, the nobility and the bishops feared. The commons did not object to meet with the nobility; the nobility absolutely refused to meet with the commons, which refusal, on the part of the privi-

leged orders, cast upon them the imputation of unreasonable obstinacy; and, besides, it was generally believed among the people that the refusal of the nobles to sit in the same hall with the commons was more a matter of social than political consideration. This belief did not tend to allay the public temper. The friends of the crown should have seen that the safety of the monarchy depended upon the bringing of the sessions of the States General to a conclusion at the earliest possible moment. Delay at this time made the Revolution a certainty. The king could have formed the constitution in the early sessions of the States General, when he had the confidence of the people, if he had had a clearly defined policy and a minister of force and ability to execute it. He should have insisted upon the orders meeting in one body, for it was of vital importance to him to have the public business dispatched and the congress dismissed at the earliest practicable moment,—just so soon as the needed relief was secured. The separation of the orders only delayed the consideration of those questions that sooner or later had to be settled. These foolish divisions caused delay and delay worked an irreparable injury to the royal cause. The king, by failing to act promptly and decisively, lost his opportunity, and he was never able afterwards to recover the lost ground. Incapable of acting wisely, of his own motion, he was led astray by weak, time-serving, short-sighted advisers, and every day the breach between the orders grew wider. On the 13th of May the bishops offered to mediate, but the parley resulted fruitlessly. The nobles still in-

sisted upon separate chambers and under all circumstances voting by order.

During this period, while a policy of inaction and waiting was adopted by the commons as the only proper and safe one for them, under the conditions, to pursue, several incidents of importance occurred.

The king's council, on the 6th of May, decided to repress certain publications that were disseminating views entirely too liberal in the opinion of the crown for the public good. The special publication that the order desired to reach was a periodical entitled *Etats Generaux*, and was edited by Mirabeau, a most dangerous foe, under prevailing conditions, for the court to attack. The publication was designated "as injurious and bearing under the appearance of liberty all the characteristics of license." Its immediate suppression was ordered. The shaft fell short of the mark, for Mirabeau, straightway taking advantage of his position as a deputy to the States General, announced that hereafter he would issue the paper as an address to his constituents, *Lettres a mes Commettants.* In referring to the edict of the royal council, he said: "It is true, then, that instead of enfranchising the nation they seek only to rivet its chains; it is in the face of the assembled nation that they dare to issue these Aulic decrees." He adroitly avoided any criticism of the king by placing the blame wholly upon the audacious ministers, as he styled them, who, he further said, were using their power to prevent a deputy of the people communicating with his constituents and informing them of the proceedings of the States General. The Assembly took cognizance

of the matter and entered a solemn protest against the council's decree. It was a signal and most important victory in the struggle for the freedom of the press. The decree was absolutely disregarded, the council openly defied, and the king failing, because of his timidity, to enforce his own royal rescript, gave new courage and impulse to every liberal writer in the land.

Another incident that occurred in the Assembly during this period of waiting is worth noting. A discussion was on, and Mounier, in speaking of Mirabeau, referred to him as Count. An obscure deputy, whose name is not even remembered, indignantly protested against the use of such a title in addressing any member of the Assembly. Mirabeau stoutly replied that he mocked himself of his title,—that any one might take it and wear it who so desired, but as for himself, he only cared to be known as a representative of a great province and of a great constituency.

Monsieur le Comte de Mirabeau was playing to the galleries, for in this connection it is worth while to recall that at a later date, on returning home from the Assembly, after having voted for the abolition of all titles and insignia of nobility, he took his servant by the ear and bawled in stentorian tones: "Look here, drôle, I trust that to you, at least, I shall always be Monsieur le Comte."

Oh! this patrician of the Third Estate was very proud of his title, notwithstanding his dramatic declarations in the face of the multitude. It was a game in which only trumps counted, and Mirabeau, in his plays to the gallery, seldom lost a trick.

The following letter, which he wrote while in England, seems to regard with contempt "the absurd pretence to family which," he said, "is so general in this land"; but, in truth, no man was ever prouder of his blood and title than Mirabeau.

"The first of a noble house should be a man whose fame immortalizes him, without any addition which princes can bestow; from such men all ought to be, and are, proud of descending, whether they flourished yesterday or ten years agone. The immortality which transcendent merit or great genius gives, is higher than all nobility. The names of Bacon, Shakespeare, Milton, and Newton will increase in splendor when the whole House of Lords, their ancestors, and descendants are buried in oblivion. Long after all the traces of family pedigrees, descents, and all the humbug of heraldry are ended, their names will go down to distant and enlightened ages, and be pronounced with delight by every tongue."

The commons determined, on the 14th of May, to declare themselves the National Assembly, and invited the clergy to join them in the name of the God of Peace and the common weal. The clergy took the matter under advisement, and it required the most urgent appeals on the part of the bishops to hold the inferior members of the order in restraint. The curés were anxious to break away and unite with the deputies of the people.

The commons had the advantage during this period over the nobility and clergy, in that they

were united in sentiment and purpose and had no dissentients in their ranks, in so far as the question of the union of the orders was concerned. On the other hand, the councils of the nobility were divided,—many of their members favored the union, while among the clergy, outside of the bishops, the sentiment was strongly with the people's deputies.

The Third Estate, from the beginning, believing that it was important that each order of the States General should be satisfied of the legitimacy of the other orders, insisted upon the verification of the powers of all the orders in common. The clergy favored separate verification by a vote of 133 to 114, and the nobility by a vote of 188 to 114,—a joint majority of only ninety-three.

On the 27th of May the nobility sent to the commons their final decision, in which they declared that they would adhere to separate verification. Mirabeau replied to this with increasing audacity; he was becoming bolder in speech as time progressed; his influence was beginning to dominate the convention. He gave courage to his colleagues, enthusiasm to the people, and impetus to the Revolution. He measured every inch of ground he covered, and he never failed to step on solid footing. It is difficult to imagine what the course of the Revolution would have been without his influence and direction. Malouet and Mounier, from whom at first so much was expected, were always temporizing, trusting not in present decision and action, but hoping that delay would produce a remedy, and the future evolve a solution. Procrastination, with them, was not only the thief of time, but also of

opportunity. When they halted, Mirabeau advanced; when they hesitated, he decided. He had a prophetic vision and seemed to see further into the future than other men; he could accurately forecast events and consequences. Often he spoke with the voice of Cassandra, for the people would not believe the truth of his prophecies. They were blind and would not see, they were deaf and would not hear.

When he first appeared in the States General, his presence, as we have seen, provoked murmurs of disapprobation, even hisses. He had the confidence of no one; the nobility scorned him, the clergy despised him, and the Third Estate feared and mistrusted him; and yet this man, whose life had been a scandal, became the foremost statesman in France. In a few months, with his commanding talents and power, he so impressed himself upon his colleagues and the country at large that he stood forth boldly as the leader of the Liberal cause and became the genius and the impulse of the Revolution. Even the king, in time, sought his aid to save the monarchy from plunging to total destruction.

The first triumph of Mirabeau in the Assembly was when he defended his friend, M. Duroverai, under the following circumstances: Duroverai was seated in the hall among the deputies and was observed passing notes written in pencil to Mirabeau. One of the members, ascertaining that he was a stranger, rose to object, and stated that a foreigner, banished from his native country and pensioned by the English government, was interfering with the

proceedings by assisting at the debates and passing notes to a certain deputy.

"Who is he?" "Where is he?" were the questions asked, and the session was thrown into great disorder.

Mirabeau rose and, addressing the Chamber, said: "I think, with the gentleman who spoke last, that no individual, not a deputy, whether he be a foreigner or a native, ought to be seated among us.

"But the sacred ties of friendship, the still more holy claims of humanity, and the respect I have for this Assembly of patriots and friends, render it an imperative duty on my part to separate from the simple question of order the odious accusation which he has had the assurance to couple with it.

"He has dared to assert that, among the numerous strangers who are assisting at our proceedings, there is an exile, one who has taken refuge in England and is in the pay of the king of Great Britain. Now this stranger, this exile, this refugee, is M. Duroverai, of Geneva, one of the most respectable citizens in the world. Never had freedom a more enlightened, a more laborious, nor a more disinterested advocate!

"From his youth, he was appointed by his countrymen to assist in the framing of a code of laws intended to place the constitution of his country on a permanent basis. Nothing was more beautiful, nothing more philosophically political, than the law in favor of the natives. He was one of its framers. This law, so little known, yet so deserving of general attention, establishes the following principle:

'That all republics have perished, nay, more, deserved to perish, for having oppressed the people, and not having known that they who governed, can preserve their own liberty only by respecting that of their brethren.'

"Elected attorney-general of Geneva by the unanimous voice of his fellow-citizens, M. Duroverai incurred, from that moment, the hatred of the aristocrats. They swore his ruin; and, certain that this intrepid magistrate would never cease to employ the authority of his office in defence of the independence of his country, they succeeded in obtaining his dismissal through the interference of a despotic minister.

"But, even in the midst of party hatred and the intrigues of base factions, M. Duroverai's character was respected even by calumny itself, whose foul breath never sullied a single action of his life.

"Included in the proscription which the aristocrats obtained from the destroyers of Genevese independence, he retired to England, and will, doubtless, never abdicate the honors of exile until freedom shall once more resume her sway at Geneva.

"A large number of the most respectable citizens of Great Britain took up the cause of the proscribed republican, procured him the most flattering reception in their country, and induced their government to grant him a pension. This was in the nature of a civic crown, awarded by that modern people whom the tutelar genius of the human race seems especially to have appointed to guard and officiate at the altars of freedom. . . .

"Behold, then, the stranger, the exile, the ref-

ugee, who has been denounced to you! Heretofore the persecuted man sought refuge at the altar where he found an inviolable asylum, and escaped from the rage of the wicked. The hall in which we are now assembled is the temple which, in the name of Frenchmen, you are raising to liberty, and will you suffer it to be polluted by an outrage committed upon a martyr of liberty?"

"The impression produced by the speech," says Dumont, "was electrical. It was succeeded by a universal burst of applause. Nothing that resembled this force and dignity of elocution had ever been heard before in this tumultuous Assembly of the Tiers Etat. Duroverai was immediately surrounded by deputies who, by their kind attentions, endeavored to atone for the insult they had offered him."

It was at this period that Mirabeau's firmness and boldness gave courage to the halting and the timid. The slightest yielding or surrender by the Third Estate to the other orders would have changed the direction of the Revolution, and it required the energy, the audacity, the prescience, and the wisdom of such a leader to direct its course. It was in this early period of the Revolution that the seeds of its success were sown.

When the nobility sent their final decision to the commons that they would not sit with the Third Estate, Mirabeau indignantly denounced such conduct. He held them up to scorn for assuming that they constituted "a legislative and sovereign chamber." Insolently, defiantly, he assailed them for their stubborn, unreasonable, and unpatriotic

course, and he closed by calling on the Third Estate to name at once a deputation to wait upon the clergy and appeal to them, in the cause of peace, to join the commons; but the bishops, when the appeal was made, urged further consideration and pleaded for delay.

The clergy thought to gain a point by calling on the commons to organize at once and to co-operate with the clergy, as a separate order, that the pressing miseries of the poor might be relieved. It was a clever ruse, and it required delicate handling. To carry out the plan, a prince of the church, the Archbishop of Aix, was delegated to visit the hall of the Third Estate. He eloquently and pathetically urged the deputies to delay no longer needed legislation by quibbling over unimportant and non-essential matters, and drawing from under his purple robe a lump of black bread, he exclaimed: "Such is the food of the peasant." The commons hesitated, for it might be dangerous to reject so seemingly fair, so apparently charitable a proposition. Even Mirabeau was puzzled; but at this moment an obscure deputy arose and, turning to the archbishop, said: "Go and tell your colleagues that if they are so impatient to assist the suffering poor, they had better come here and join the friends of the people. It is vain to employ stratagem like this to induce us to change our firm resolution. Tell them to embarrass no longer our proceedings with affected delays, but as ministers of religion, let them forego that luxury which surrounds them, and that splendor which puts indigence to the blush. We refer the clergy to the principles of the primitive church. The ancient

canons authorized them to sell even the sacred vases for the relief of the poor. Let them resume the modesty of their origin, discharge the insolent lackeys by whom they are attended, sell their superb equipages, and convert their superfluous wealth into food for the indigent." The speech fully answered the proposition, and the archbishop withdrew.

"Who is the speaker?" was the question asked, but he was known only to a few, and it was some time before his name was circulated. He was Robespierre. Mirabeau, who was a good judge of character, remarked: "That man will go far, for he believes what he says."

Maximilien Marie Isidor Robespierre was the son of a village lawyer at Arras, in the Province of Artois. There is no character among all the leaders of the Revolution so difficult to understand, none whose motives have been so unfathomable, because his conduct stood in such contrast to his seemingly natural disposition. This man who wept over the death of a pet bird, who recoiled from imposing sentence of death on a desperate assassin, became the bloodthirsty leader of the Revolution and, under his inhuman proscriptions, satisfied to the full the voracious appetite of the guillotine, by sending daily to execution both friend and foe.

He was timid, secretive, reticent, and reserved. He had those qualities that reveal themselves in deeds, not in words. He was vain, conceited and ambitious. He was neither sordid nor avaricious. He could be neither cajoled, bribed, nor driven. He neither fawned upon his friends nor flattered his enemies. He asked no favors from the mighty.

He was absolutely wanting in that magnetism that attracts men, and that open candor that wins friends; and yet he developed, in time, a wonderful power of impressing and influencing men. He had the genius of application and persistency. He pursued the even tenor of his way with a purpose well defined, and he followed the object of his ambition without deviation and with an indefatigable industry. One by one his enemies fell before him and, at last, he became the dictator of the Revolution. He was the master mind that directed and controlled it. This timid, insignificant creature pushed his way through a crowd of mighty revolutionary leaders, forged to the front and wielded a power greater than any of them had ever exercised. He was the uncrowned plebeian king, tyrant, if you will, of France, the incarnation of the Reign of Terror. We may sneer and scoff at him as much as we please; our prejudices, because of his brutal and bloody policy, may influence our judgment of his character, but there was in him an innate force, a persistent energy, an intellectual power, a relentless, a remorseless, an inflexible determination that can be appreciated only when we weigh his natural disadvantages, the obstacles he had to overcome, and consider the position he attained, the influence he exerted, and the results he reached. Simply to describe him in the language of Carlyle as "sea green, incorruptible," conveys no idea of his mental and moral qualities. Such a character cannot be dismissed by so feeble a description.

When he was seven years of age, his mother died

and his father abandoned him. He was virtually a waif. By the kind intercession of the Bishop of Arras, he secured a scholarship in the College of Louis le Grand, at Paris. In this institution he remained for ten years. So correct was he in his conduct, so attentive to his studies, that the council of the college, at the time of his graduation, rewarded him with a special commendation and accorded him a gratification of 600 livres.

Returning to his native town, he was, in due time, registered as an attorney and soon acquired the reputation of being a reliable, painstaking member of his profession, but in no sense a brilliant advocate.

Some time after his admission to the bar, several peasants who complained of being oppressed by the Bishop of Arras, retained Robespierre to represent them. He fought the case earnestly, and, in consequence, brought down upon himself the bitter resentment of the clergy. They charged him with ingratitude to the bishop, who had protected him when he needed a patron. The criticism was just, —Robespierre should have declined the case. He owed a duty to his benefactor, and no public necessity required him to oppose his friend and former patron.

During his early days while at the bar, he was neat and fastidious in the matter of his dress. He was somewhat of a dandy, he affected poetry, loved birds and flowers, and delighted to wander alone in the fields. His favorite author was Rousseau. Although shy and melancholy, he was fond of feminine society, but never had the courage to marry.

He was appointed to the bench, as a judge in the criminal court, and was called upon to sentence a murderer to capital punishment, which duty so affected him, that he shortly afterwards sent in his resignation.

When the States General was summoned, he was elected a deputy of the Third Estate. He went to Paris, unknown, poor in purse and without influence. In the Assembly, at first, he made a most unfavorable impression. "His mean countenance, his stiffness and timidity, the constant tension of his muscles and his voice, his straining utterance and his short-sighted look, left a painful, tiresome impression which people tried to get rid of by laughing at him."

"I had twice occasion to converse with Robespierre," says Dumont. "He had a sinister expression of countenance, never looked you in the face and had a continual and unpleasant winking of the eyes . . . He told me that he was a prey to the most childish timidity, that he never approached the tribune without trembling, and that when he began to speak, his faculties were entirely absorbed by fear."

Whenever he addressed the Assembly, his colleagues contemptuously smiled and scoffed at his labored effort. These insults galled his vanity and his sensitive nature. Mirabeau was the one man in the Assembly who, discerning his real sincerity, took no part in these indignities.

It seemed audacious for such a man to speak in a body so crowded with brilliant orators. Failure, however, did not crush him, it only spurred him to

renewed effort. He had the temper of the puritan and the spirit of the fanatic. He believed he had a mission to perform, and he could not be dissuaded by defeat nor confounded by ridicule. He carried his mortification home to his humble lodging and brooded over it.

Interrupted and howled down by the deputies, he turned to the Club of the Jacobins, and there he obtained a hearing, for the members recognized him as one who was sincere in his professions and earnest in his advocacy of the popular cause. When, in the Assembly, if his colleagues would not listen, he could always appeal to the galleries. It hardly seemed possible that the time would come when the deputies would not only listen when he spoke, but tremble. He surely, at this period, gave no intimation of his future powers, except, perhaps, to the far-seeing vision of Mirabeau.

Robespierre, while in Paris, lived frugally on the salary he received as deputy, one-fourth of which he sent to his sister at Arras, one-fourth to a mistress who loved him passionately, but whom he seldom saw. His lodgings, cold and cheerless, were located in a dismal and deserted quarter of the city. His dinners cost thirty sous and he had hardly enough money to pay for his clothes. "When the Assembly," says Michelet, "decreed a general mourning for the death of Franklin, Robespierre was extremely embarrassed. He borrowed a black stuff coat of a man much taller than himself, and the coat dragged four inches on the ground. 'Nihil habet paupertas durius in se quam quod ridiculos homines facit.'"

His energy never flagged. He was in constant attendance upon the daily sessions of the Assembly, and at night was a regular visitor at his club, where he argued those questions that the Assembly would not let him discuss. He displayed the greatest prudence in not attempting to outstrip the Revolution. He kept pace with it. "He was," says Lamartine, "of no party, but of all parties which in their turn served his ideal of the Revolution. . . . The Revolution, decimated in its progress, must one day or other inevitably arrive at a last stage, and he desired it should end in himself." It did end in himself, but at a time and in a manner that he did not expect.

"He was," said Napoleon, "the true scapegoat of the Revolution." Perhaps he was made a sacrifice for the sins of others, but, heaven knows, he had enough of his own to answer for.

George Henry Lewes believes that he honestly tried "to arrest anarchy and to shape society in order according to his convictions." Watson says: "However chimerical, Robespierre's ideals were lofty and he lived by them and died for them." Dr. Jan Ten Brink, in his careful study of "Robespierre and the Red Terror," declares that: "Still, in spite of all, he was an honorable character, a spirit fired with the noblest ideals, but a statesman without political ability, an obstinate fanatic destitute of genius."

He may have had high ideals, he may have mapped out in his mind a great future for France, but his past had given no guarantee that he could be depended upon to add to her glory or her security.

When the crisis came, he had not the courage to "dare." In his last struggle, he displayed a weakness that by some of his admirers is taken for virtue. It is hard to believe that any man with such a trail of blood as that which marked the career of Robespierre would have hesitated to shed more blood because of any moral compunctions or patriotic considerations.

He became spiritless, suddenly supine, and was overthrown by men no more worthy of confidence than he was. His continued power would have resulted in further bloodshed; his death was a blessing to France, for it caused a reaction against "The Terror."

CHAPTER XV

DEATH OF THE DAUPHIN—THIRD ESTATE CALLS ON NOBLES AND CLERGY TO SUBMIT TO A COMMON VERIFICATION—NAME OF CONVENTION—SPIRITED DEBATE—SIÉYÈS—OATH OF THE TENNIS COURT — ROYAL SITTING — ASSEMBLY REFUSES TO ADJOURN — MIRABEAU DEFIES THE ORDER OF THE KING.

In June the king had a sorrow in his household, —the dauphin was dying. A year before this, all France would have been hushed in grief. The nation, loyal to the crown, would have sorrowed for the death of its little king in embryo; but now, amidst storm and strife, the feeble life went out, and the people, engrossed in more important matters, hardly noted the event. Princes had lost their charm. Royalty and loyalty were getting far apart. Fortunate boy! He died just in time to escape the bitter days in store for him, to escape the trouble that would have been too heavy for such a weakling to bear.

Five weeks had elapsed since the first meeting of the States General, and during this time the many parleys between the orders had come to naught. The people were growing more impatient day by day and it became necessary, in order to quiet the public mind, that something decisive should be done. Mirabeau declared that "any plan of conciliation rejected by one party can no longer be ex-

amined by the other. A month is past; it is time to take a decisive step; a deputy of Paris has an important motion to make,—let us hear him." He then introduced to the tribune Abbé Siéyès, who moved that the nobility and the clergy should be invited to meet with the Third Estate to verify the powers, which verification would take place whether they were absent or present.

The call to the higher orders to join the Third Estate reads as follows: "We are commissioned by the deputies of the Commons of France to apprize you that they can no longer delay the fulfilment of the obligation imposed on all the representatives of the nation. It is assuredly time that those that claim this quality should make themselves known by a common verification of their powers, and begin at once to attend to the national interest. From the necessity which the representatives of the nation are under to proceed to business, the deputies of the Commons entreat you, and their duty enjoins them to address you, as well individually as collectively, a last summons to come to the Hall of the States to attend, concur in and submit, like themselves, to the common verification of powers. We are, at the same time, directed to inform you that the general call of all the bailliages convoked will take place in an hour, that the Assembly will immediately proceed to the verification and that such as do not appear will be declared defaulters."

There was no misunderstanding the language and the purpose of this call. "This was the first revolutionary act," says Thiers.

The invitation not having been accepted, the

commons constituted themselves the national legislative body of France. This was a bold but a wise move, for the convention of delegates, representing the people, was now the only legally constituted legislative assembly in the kingdom. They formed not an order, but a congress of popular representatives created by a legitimate authority.

On the first day of the calling of the roll and the presentation of the credentials, three curés entered the Assembly; on the second day, six, and on the third and fourth days, ten. It goes without saying that they were greeted with most enthusiastic acclaim.

The next important move was to give a name to the convention, and the debate on this question, strange to say, was most acrimonious and produced a very bitter feeling among the delegates.

Mirabeau proposed as a title "Representatives of the French People"; Legrand, that of "National Assembly"; Mounier, that of "Deliberative Majority in the absence of the Minority." It would have been surprising if the last designation had been adopted, for the very title suggested a doubt as to the legal and reasonable existence of the body as a national legislative assembly.

Mirabeau's speech on this question aroused the most bitter antagonism. He was boldly assailed and hissed, and was absent when the final vote was taken. He contended that the commons had no right to usurp the entire legislative power, although he favored separate and independent organization of the Third Estate.

"To call themselves," he said, "a National As-

sembly would be to depreciate to the lowest degree, the king, the nobles and the clergy,—it would, if the government displayed any vigor, prove the beginning of civil war. To vote themselves simply an Assembly of the Commons, would, on the other hand, be only expressing an undoubted fact and would not force the nobles and the clergy to join them; it merely maintained the sub-divisions of the Assembly then existing."

As he proceeded further, his warmth increased and he declared the deputies failed to understand in its full meaning the term "people" in his suggested or proposed title,—"Assembly of the French People."

"I persevere," he said (this peroration Dumont claims to have written), "in my motion and in its only expression that has called forth animadversion,—I mean the denomination of French people. I adopt it, defend it, and I proclaim it for the very reason urged in objection to it. Yes! it is because the term 'people' is not sufficiently respected in France that it is cast into the shade and covered with the rust of prejudice, because it presents an idea alarming to our pride and revolting to our vanity,—and is pronounced with contempt in the chamber of the aristocrats . . . Do you not perceive that you require the word 'people,' because it shows the people that you have united your fate to theirs. And it will teach them to centre in you all their thoughts and all their hopes! The Batavian heroes, who founded the liberties of their country, were more able tacticians than we are. They adopted the denomination 'gueux,' or beggarly

fellows; they chose this title because their tyrants had endeavored to cast it upon them as a term of opprobrium, and this designation, by attaching to their party that numerous and powerful class, so degraded by the despotism of the aristocracy, was, at the same time, their glory, their strength, and the pledge of their success. The friends of freedom select the name which is most useful to them, and not that by which they are most flattered. They are called ' remonstrators' in America; ' shepherds' in Switzerland and ' gueux'—beggars—in the Low Countries."

Mirabeau, after he finished his speech, stood in a defiant attitude, but calm and self-possessed. The deputies assailed him with shouts and imprecations. It was in the course of his remarks that he declared himself in favor of the royal veto, saying that in his view, the king's veto was so essential a part of the constitution, that without it, he would rather live in Constantinople than in France, and that he could conceive nothing more alarming than the despotic oligarchy of six hundred individuals. This bold declaration specially aroused the anger of the radicals.

Dumont, who witnessed the scene, says that Mirabeau delivered the peroration in " a voice of thunder which was heard with a species of terror, and produced an extraordinary effect. It was succeeded not by cries, but by convulsions of rage. The agitation was general and a storm of invectives burst upon the speaker from all parts of the hall."

Dumont further says that an hour after the deliv-

ery of the speech he called on Mirabeau, and found him triumphant. "He compared the Assembly to wild asses, who had obtained from nature no other faculty than that of kicking and biting. They did not frighten me, my dear friend, and in a week you shall see me more powerful than ever. . . . The thinkers will see something very profound in my motion. As for the fools, I despise them too much to hate them, and will save them in spite of themselves."

Dumont adds: "With all this excess of pride and temporary courage, he had not sufficient firmness to attend at the call of the house. He did not, therefore, vote upon the question, and thus it was that his name did not appear upon the list of deputies held up to the people as traitors. Even his popularity did not suffer at the Palais Royal, whilst Malouet, Mounier, and several others who had maintained the same opinions less openly, were delivered over to public censure."

"Outside the Assembly," says Arthur Young, "the motion of Mirabeau was better relished than that of the Abbé Siéyès. But his character is a dead weight upon him. There is a suspicion that he has received 100,000 livres from the queen."

The Abbé Siéyès carried the convention with him, when he argued and clearly demonstrated that the deputies of the Third Estate represented ninety-six one-hundredths of the nation; that consequently they were entitled to be called "The National Assembly"; that certain duties had been imposed upon them by the nation, and that the will of

the people would be annulled if the privileged orders persisted in their obstinate, unreasonable and unpatriotic policy. The convention, when organized, will be ready at all times to welcome the other orders, the doors will be left open, but they cannot and should not any longer, by their refusal to cooperate with the Third Estate, defeat the purpose of the calling of the States General. It is alleged that this plan of action was advised by Thomas Jefferson, whose whole spirit was in touch with the purposes and the principles of the Revolution. There was much in common between Jefferson and Siéyès; they were both subtle, ingenious, clear-headed and intriguing politicians. They encompassed their ends by quiet, persistent work; they were masters in the art of scheming. They were not orators, but, possessing facile pens, they expressed their thoughts, in writing, clearly and succinctly. They were close students of public questions, and their taste and thoughts ran in the same channel. They were patriotic, but not always consistent in their policies and actions. They both belonged to the same school of politics and philosophy; they were avaricious of place and power; believed in the equality of men before the law, and affected to despise the distinctions of class in social as well as in political life. Although writing in different tongues, it is remarkable what a close resemblance there is in their literary styles. If there ever was a Frenchman who could have written the American Declaration of Independence, it was the Abbé Siéyès.

Most of the delegates were anxious to have the

convention settle the question of designation at once, and they urged immediate consideration and action. A small number of deputies, however, for some reason or other, desiring to delay the matter, excitedly called for adjournment. The session was thrown into an uproar, for the minority, though small, made up in noise what they lacked in numbers. The weather was stormy and tempestuous and the wind howled around and through the building, greatly adding to the confusion. During all this contention, Bailly, the president, sat unmoved and refused to put the motions. The minority, at last, withdrew, and when quiet was restored, the president suggested that further consideration of the matter should be postponed until daylight, for it was then about three o'clock in the morning. The convention, acting upon his advice, adjourned, and on the 17th of May, the title "The National Assembly" was adopted by a vote of 491 to 90.

The duty of explaining the motives of the convention in organizing and designating itself "The National Assembly" was intrusted to Siéyès, and he acquitted himself with great honor and success. Siéyès was leading the commons, for he, unquestionably, at this time, was one of the master minds of the convention.

Emmanuel Joseph Siéyès, commonly called Abbé Siéyès, was forty-one years of age when the States General convened. He had been educated for the church, but early turned his attention to the study of social and political questions, and was more of a philosopher than a priest. While at Saint Sulpice, completing his theological studies, he

wrote much, and in his writings proved that he belonged to the school of advanced thought; it was consequently intimated to him that he might find more congenial quarters elsewhere, and upon this hint he departed and took refuge in a more friendly seminary, where he prepared for his degree at the Sorbonne. From philosophy and theology he turned to practical politics, and in 1788, just on the eve of the Revolution, published a pamphlet which attracted public attention and had a remarkable success. He asked: "What is the Third Estate?" And then answered his own question by saying, "Everything!" "What has it been till now?" "Nothing." "What does it desire to be?" "Something!"

The clerical order neglected to send him as a delegate to the States General, but at the last moment he was taken up by the Third Estate and elected as one of its representatives.

In the early stages of the Revolution, he materially aided the popular cause, but was not responsible for its subsequent excesses. His victory over Mirabeau on the motion to designate the convention as the National Assembly, was notable, and it required courage of heart and soul to take so bold a stand.

Siéyès favored the assumption of the legislative power by the deputies of the Third Estate to the exclusion of the other orders, which view, in the opinion of the privileged classes, was paramount to treason, and if the Revolution at that time had been stayed the Abbé, perhaps, would have had to answer as a traitor. He was prudent enough, how-

ever, to have Legrand put the original motion. He was not an orator, and in the stormy days of the Revolution he withdrew from active participation in leadership.

He survived the Revolution and schemed with Napoleon and Ducos to establish the Consulate, by which he became one of the rulers of France. He could not, of course, cope with Napoleon, and at last retired to private life to enjoy his wealth, his books, and the delights of a well-earned leisure.

Bourrienne, in his Memoirs of Napoleon, says: "In the intercourse, not very frequent, certainly, which I had with him he appeared to be very far beneath the reputation which he had acquired. Siéyès had written in his countenance, 'Give me money.' I recollect that I one day alluded to this expression in the anxious face of Siéyès to the first consul. 'You are right,' observed he to me, smiling, 'when money is in question, Siéyès is quite a matter of fact man. He sends his ideology to the right about, and thus becomes easily manageable. He readily abandons his constitutional dreams for a good round sum, and that is very convenient.' One day when Talleyrand was conversing with the second consul, Cambacérès said, 'Siéyès is a very profound man.' 'Profound!' said Talleyrand, 'yes, he is a cavity, a perfect cavity.'"

Criticisms coming from this source must be taken with considerable reservation. Siéyès may not have been a very profound man, but he unquestionably displayed great wisdom in the early years of the Revolution, and under circumstances that required the exercise of sound and safe judgment.

Mirabeau described him as "a metaphysician travelling on a map."

The National Assembly through Siéyès, who was deputed to speak for it, declared that "the denomination of National Assembly is the only one suitable to the Assembly in the present state of things, as well because the members who compose it are the only representatives legitimately and publicly known and verified, as because they are sent by nearly the whole of the nation; and lastly because the representation being one and indivisible, none of the deputies, for whatever order or class he has been elected, has a right to exercise those functions separately from this Assembly."

The paper further declared that the Assembly would never cease to hope that the absent deputies would, in time, be gathered in its bosom, nor will it ever cease to call upon them to fulfil the obligations the nation had imposed upon them when the decree was entered for the holding of the States General.

In the exercise of its power the Assembly legalized the levy of taxes though imposed without the national consent. This wise resolution was passed simply to show the court and the nation that it was not the purpose of the Assembly to impede the course of the administration of the constituted authorities.

This assumption of legislative power on the part of the Assembly, composed of the deputies of the Third Estate, caused the greatest excitement and enthusiasm throughout France. The representatives had shown not only courage, but great wis-

dom. Every step had been deliberately taken, and the reasons given were logical, just, wise, and patriotic.

The clergy could no longer restrain the liberal curés, and a vote being taken, the poll showed 149 votes to 115 in favor of the union of the orders.

The nobility and the hierarchy, aroused and startled by the action of the Assembly, determined to act promptly and decisively, for further delay meant danger. To stem the tide, the king was besought by the nobility and the higher clergy to interfere with his royal authority lest all should be lost. But poor Louis was between two fires; Necker on one side, and the queen and the higher orders on the other.

Necker's plan was a compromise providing for a union of all the orders, but restricting the powers of the Assembly. It was a temporary, half-hearted measure that came too late. Mirabeau said of Necker, "He is like a clock that always goes too slow." Even this plan was not agreed to by the nobility, and a royal sitting was ordered to take place on the 22d of June. A subsequent proclamation postponed the sitting from Monday, the 22d, to Tuesday, the 23d.

Necker's plan having been rejected, he decided not to attend the royal sitting, and tendered his resignation as minister, but the Count of Artois angrily exclaimed: "No, we will not accept the resignation, but will keep you as a hostage, for you have aroused all this trouble."

On the 20th the hall of the Assembly was closed, under the pretext that it was necessary to prepare it

for the king's presence. The Assembly had adjourned on the 19th to meet on the following day, and Bailly, its president, believing it his duty to attend, in compliance with the resolution, repaired to the hall, but found it surrounded by soldiers of the French Guards. The deputies, gathering in numbers, protested against this outrage and clamored for admittance, but Bailly, with his usual prudence and good judgment, appealed to them to act wisely and not to injure the popular cause by allowing their temper to blind their wisdom and direct their conduct. Finding it impossible to enter the hall, a deputy proposed that they should go to Marly and hold a session under the windows of the king's palace, a royal sitting in earnest, but not in accordance with the wishes of the king, and two days before the date assigned by Louis for the august meeting at which he was personally to preside. A wiser head suggested that they should adjourn to the Tennis Court, and the suggestion was immediately acted upon.

" The Tennis Court," says Michelet, " was a miserable, ugly, poor, and unfurnished building, but the better on that account. The Assembly also was poor and represented the people . . . They remained standing all day long, having scarcely a wooden bench. It was like the manger of the new religion—its stable of Bethlehem!"

It is a shrine, a venerated spot sacred to the holy cause of liberty. It was here that the voices of humble but brave men were heard, vowing in solemn oath to release their land from tyranny. Like Faneuil Hall, in Boston, and the State House, in

Philadelphia, it is one of the world's cradles of liberty.

To this cheerless, dreary hall the deputies marched in procession with Bailly at their head, followed by a crowd of enthusiastic people. The hall was spacious, without seating accommodations. An arm-chair was provided for the president, but he declined its use, declaring that he would rather stand with his colleagues.

Indignant protests were made against the unjust and unwarranted suspension of the sittings, and plans were suggested to prevent a repetition of such interference. Some of the ardent spirits proposed that the Assembly should march to Paris, but Bailly persuaded them against this, fearing that the deputies might subject themselves to insult and violence. Mounier then moved they should bind themselves by an oath not to separate until they had framed and established a constitution for France. This motion was received with acclaim. The multitude that had crowded into the hall joined in the applause, and amidst the greatest enthusiasm the delegates, with upraised hands and uncovered heads, entered into a solemn league and covenant. In unison, their voices rang out in clear tones: "We take a solemn oath never to separate, and to assemble wherever circumstances shall require, till the constitution of the kingdom is established and founded on a solid basis." Only one deputy, Martin d'Auch, when the declaration was signed by the delegates, wrote opposite his name, "opposer." After this act he passed into oblivion.

This oath was an earnest of the purpose of the

Assembly and gave notice that the days of arbitrary rule were numbered. It was an event that marked an epoch in the world's civilization as well as in the regeneration of France.

After the taking of the oath the Assembly adjourned to meet on the following day at the same place, but when the deputies gathered at the appointed hour they were refused admission because the princes had leased the hall for a game of tennis,—as usual, the amusements of the court were of first and paramount importance. What a dangerous game these foolish courtiers were playing! How little did they read and heed the future!

On the 22d, when the deputies found the tennis court closed against them, they knew not where to go. Some one suggested the monastery of the Recollets, but when the deputies requested admission the frightened monks shut the door in their faces.

The Church of St. Louis was named and thither they repaired. The Third Estate, houseless and homeless, found refuge at last in the sanctuary of God.

The majority of the clergy, with the Archbishop of Vienne at their head, joined the Assembly and submitted to the common verification. The union was greeted with transports of joy.

The memorable 23d of June at last arrived. The Salle des Menus had been made ready for the royal sitting. Court painters, carpenters, upholsterers, decorators, and designers had been actively employed preparing the great hall for the reception of the king. The masters of ceremony, too, were again at work. Fresh humiliations were

put upon the people's representatives. They were to enter at a side door, the nobility and the clergy through a more imposing entrance. "Weakness was playing at the dangerous game of humiliating the strong for the last time," says Michelet. It was a like discrimination that had offended the commons at the first meeting of the States General. The Bourbons, in the meanwhile, had learned nothing by experience. These preferences and class distinctions further irritated the temper of the Third Estate.

When Bailly arrived at the hall, he found the door through which the commons were to enter locked. He knocked repeatedly, but the answer always came, "It is not yet time." The deputies, standing in the rain, "humiliated, wet, and dirty," had about decided to depart, when the door opened. Upon entering the hall, they found the higher orders comfortably seated in the choice locations. The nobles were amused at the bedraggled and disconsolate appearance of the people's representatives.

The king, the nobility, the clergy, and the Third Estate had not met in joint convention since the fifth of May, but the meeting now presented a totally different appearance from that splendid and memorable occasion. Then all was joy and promise, now all was gloom and apprehension. The sentiments and hopes of the first session of the States General had vanished, and now a feeling of sullenness and mistrust possessed the commons. The king had been keyed for the occasion; he assumed a dictatorial air, a commanding tone, which were not in any sense impressive, for he was too

weak in character and disposition to be earnest in manner or determined in purpose. He had been advised that this was the only safe plan to pursue, but he was a poor player to enact such a role. Instead of intimidating the commons, he only irritated them; instead of enforcing obedience, he aroused a rebellious spirit. So flimsy was the guise, that he provoked a feeling of pity rather than contempt. The deputies knew that he was speaking for others, not for himself.

He had not been welcomed with applause. No cries of "Vive le Roi!" rang through the hall, for the commons had decided to remain silent, Mirabeau declaring that "the silence of the people is the lesson of kings." It was a grave and solemn meeting, that foreboded trouble.

Since the commons had last seen the king, seven weeks had intervened, but in that interval of time the Third Estate had organized a National Assembly, had passed laws, and had taken an oath not to separate until they had established a constitution.

Louis, in his speech, enjoined the separation of the orders, he annulled the resolutions and declarations of the National Assembly, and stated that the feudal rights were property, and as such, were inviolable. His speech was a discordant note from beginning to end. When the king finished his remarks, the nobility applauded, but it is said that during the applause a loud, stern voice proceeding from the commons' deputies cried out, "Silence! there." This sounded like the roar of the lion. In the absence of anything to the contrary, we may presume it was Mirabeau who spoke.

The king, after concluding his ill-timed speech, ordered the Assembly to separate at once and to meet the following day in the chambers assigned to the several orders. Without further ado, his Majesty retired from the hall, followed by the nobility and part of the clergy.

The commons, again deserted by the other orders, sat for a time in silence, which silence at last was broken by Mirabeau, who said: "I admit that what you have just heard might be for the welfare of the country, were it not that the presents of despotism are always dangerous. What is this insulting dictatorship? The pomp of arms, the violation of the national temple are resorted to, to command you to be happy! Who gives these commands? Your mandatory, he who should rather receive them from you, gentlemen, from us, who are invested with a political and an inviolable priesthood; from us, in a word, to whom alone twenty-five millions of men are looking for certain happiness. But the liberty of your discussions is enchained, a military force surrounds the Assembly! Is Catiline at our gates? I demand investing yourselves with your dignity, with your legislative power; you enclose yourselves within the religion of your oath. It does not permit you to separate till you have formed a constitution."

His speech was timely and was warmly applauded. It aroused the greatest enthusiasm in the hearts of all and gave courage to the timid and faltering deputies.

Brézé, Marquis de Dreux, Master of Ceremonies, he whom we have met before, was sent to the hall to

MIRABEAU DEFYING THE ORDER OF THE KING

Drawn by John R. Neill

remind the deputies of the king's command. "You have heard," he said, addressing the president, "the orders of the king," to which Bailly replied: "I am going to take those of the Assembly, which can adjourn only by its own act." Brézé then wanted to know if that was the answer he was to carry back. Bailly, turning to those deputies who were near him, remarked: "I think that the nation when assembled can receive no orders." Here was the opportunity for Mirabeau. In his dramatic manner, addressing himself directly to the royal messenger, he exclaimed: "We have heard the intentions suggested to the king; and you, who can never be his organ to the National Assembly, you who have neither place, voice nor right to speak, you are not the man to remind us of his discourse. Go tell those who sent you that we are here by the will of the people and nothing but the power of the bayonet shall drive us hence." "Only great men pronounce the decisive words of the epochs."

Brézé then withdrew, backing himself out of the hall with all the ceremony that could distinguish the manner and conduct of a finished courtier of France. It was, no doubt, the first time in his life that he had ever paid such respect and homage to the Third Estate.

Immediately upon the withdrawal of the king's messenger, Siéyès quietly remarked: "We are today what we were yesterday,—let us deliberate."

Upon motion of Mirabeau, the Assembly decreed the inviolability of every deputy and declared that any one who should offer them violence would be guilty of treason.

It is said that Louis had familiarized himself with the events that had marked the career of Charles I., and in the feeble light of his intellect he thought he saw and understood the causes and reasons that had led to the deposition and the execution of England's king. He sought to avoid the mistakes of that monarch by evincing a yielding and a conciliatory, rather than a stubborn and a haughty, disposition. If Louis had possessed some of the stubbornness of Charles, and Charles had possessed some of the yielding spirit of Louis, the crowns of both might have been saved.

"We may reason *ad infinitum*," says Dumont, "upon the causes of the Revolution, but in my mind there is only one dominant and efficient cause, —the weakness of the king's character. Had a firm and decided prince been in the place of Louis XVI., the Revolution would not have happened." When he says "the Revolution would not have happened" he means such a revolution. He further declares: "There is not a single period during the existence of the first Assembly when the king could not have re-established his authority and framed a mixed constitution much stronger and more solid than the old parliamentary and nobiliary monarchy of France. His weakness, his indecision, his half measures and half councils, and more particularly his want of foresight, led to the catastrophe."

The language of Mirabeau to the king's messenger: "Go tell your master that we will not disperse, that we are here by the will of the people, and that only bayonets can drive us hence," was a bold and defiant answer to the king's command.

Such language had never before been addressed to the monarch. Heretofore, it had always been supplicatory in character. This was in no humble vein. It was a defiance to his authority, no longer an appeal to his clemency.

There was one of two things at this juncture for the king to do; either to apply the bayonet, or to surrender. He quickly did the latter.

The nobility, baffled and beaten, their ranks broken, their leaders disconcerted and divided in council, endeavored, as a last resort, to make the king believe that his only safety lay in the force of his army. In this particular they were right, for it was the only remedy left unless they should repair their mistakes by uniting with the Assembly, and perhaps it was not too late, if they had acted with candor, sincerity, and prudence, to recover the lost ground.

Mirabeau was now the undisputed leader of the Assembly, and the idol of the people. The very mention of his name set the enthusiasm of the Palais Royal aglow.

"He talks much," said his envious brother during the early sessions of the Assembly, "but is not heard." But now his words rang throughout France, yea, throughout all Europe. There was much truth in his brother's statement, for he had spoken from the tribune incessantly and often without avail. He suffered a scathing defeat on the resolution of June 17, when Siéyès carried the convention against his motion. He, too, had fallen under the popular censure because of his advocacy of the king's veto. He often had been hissed and

was even suspected of negotiating with the court party; but now all this was changed, his timely boldness had retrieved his losses and entrenched him in popular confidence and favor. At one leap he became the foremost man of the nation.

Four days after the king had commanded the orders to separate, he invited them to meet in joint convention. "We are now one family," said the exultant and hopeful Bailly. But alas! for king and state, the harmony was only apparent, not real. Before the rejoicings of the people were over, the court party began to plot and counter-plot, and they persuaded Louis, after appealing to his fears, to change once more his policy of conciliation. He was now to resort to force and by means of his army bring the people to a realizing sense of what they owed their king. Troops began to arrive in great numbers at Versailles, and their presence disturbed the repose of the Assembly and aroused the fears of the people. So sudden and vast were the preparations that the purpose of the court was easily understood. At Mirabeau's suggestion, on the 9th of July, a firm, but respectful address was presented to the king, requesting the dismissal of the troops, but Louis replied that he alone was the judge of the necessity of assembling or dismissing troops. He at the same time, however, assured the Assembly that his only purpose was to prevent public disturbances and to protect the deputies.

CHAPTER XVI

DISMISSAL OF NECKER—BRETEUIL NAMED MINISTER—CAMILLE DESMOULINS—FALL OF THE BASTILE—VERSAILLES—LOUIS VISITS THE ASSEMBLY—HE GOES TO PARIS—DESERTION AND EMIGRATION OF THE NOBLES—TALLEYRAND

NECKER was dismissed on July 11th. The queen even suggested his arrest. This would have been better than the course that was adopted, for it, at least, would have kept Necker in the country.

While the minister was at dinner, a messenger brought him word that he must quit France and without delay. Necker quietly informed his wife, and together they made preparations to depart immediately. In a few hours they were on their way to Brussels, long before the news of the banishment reached Paris.

A ministry was formed with Breteuil at its head, a blustering braggart, who by his boastfulness had impressed the queen with his assumed importance. "His big, manly voice sounded like energy; he used to step heavily and stamp with his foot, as if he would conjure an army out of the earth." General de Broglie, an aristocrat of the deepest dye, and a general of the old order, was in the saddle directing the movements of the troops and using all the foreign regiments to protect Versailles and to threaten Paris. Foulon had also been named a minister, and the king could not have chosen one

so distasteful to the people. The mere mention of his name aroused the greatest indignation, for it was he that had said, "If the people are hungry, let them eat hay,—my horses eat it." He was credited with having recently declared that "France needs to be mowed."

The court had lost its head, it was plunging to destruction. So far as the king was concerned, his conduct was a clear breach of faith. There was no excuse for his treachery; but Louis never had any real honor, he was too weak to be honest. If he had asserted his authority when the commons defied his order to separate, there might have been advanced some reason for his action; but he allowed that opportunity to pass, and after inviting the orders to meet, and giving assurances to the country of his desire to aid in effecting the needed reforms, he immediately began to plot to reduce the Assembly to submission.

It was not until noon of Sunday, July 12, that the news in relation to the changed policy of the court reached Paris. The Palais Royal was crowded when the messenger arrived from Versailles. At first he was howled down and charged with circulating a baseless rumor, but when his earnestness convinced the people of his truthfulness and when further confirmation of his report was given, the crowd was thrown into the wildest excitement. In the midst of this confusion a young man suddenly leaped upon a table and commanded attention. The crowd grew silent and listened. "The dismissal of Necker," shouted the orator, "is the signal of massacre; it is the knell of a St.

Bartholomew of patriots. The Swiss and German troops encamped in the Field of Mars will march upon us to-night to butcher us. We must arm ourselves. Let us hoist a cockade! We must have a rallying sign, a badge,—what shall it be? Red, the color of the free order of the Cincinnati, or green, the color of hope?" "Green," shouted the crowd, and snatching a leaf from the tree overhead, the speaker fastened it to his coat. In an instant every one followed his example, and the trees were stripped of their foliage, as if smitten by a storm of hail.

The orator, still commanding attention, drew from his pocket two pistols, and brandishing them over his head, cried out, "I call my brethren to liberty. To arms! to arms!" The crowd, by this time maddened with excitement under the whirring words of the speaker, took up the refrain until it rang throughout the garden and aroused all Paris. "To arms! To arms!" was the cry. It was a public declaration of civil war. There was to be no further parleying.

Who was this young orator that so thrilled the crowd—this Patrick Henry of the Revolution? Camille Desmoulins was twenty-nine years of age when the States General met. At that time he was wandering about Paris as a briefless barrister reduced to the extremes of poverty. He had enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education and chose the bar as his profession, which, soon after the Revolution began, he abandoned for a literary career. He was light and frivolous and easily controlled by his emotions. He was witty, sarcastic, and had a most

caustic pen, which he never hesitated to use in any cause he espoused. During certain periods of the Revolution he wielded a considerable influence. At times he was eloquent, notwithstanding a slight impediment in his speech. "His lively sallies," writes Michelet, "playing about his embarrassed lips, escaped like darts."

He followed, with zeal, the movements of the Revolution and took an active part in its excesses. The crimes to which he gave his approval and support were, in his opinion, necessary for the safety of the republic. Although of a tender, an affectionate disposition, he often turned a deaf ear to the appeals of mercy and justice. He was controlled by that rabid radical party spirit that blinds the reason and silences the conscience of men.

Having been employed by Robespierre to assail the Girondins, he wrote a pamphlet that aroused a strong public sentiment against them and caused their arrest and condemnation. He was foolish enough to satisfy his curiosity by witnessing their execution. The horror of the injustice was too much for his emotional nature; it aroused remorse in his heart and he fled from the dreadful scene, crying aloud in his agony, "O, my God! it is I that killed them! Let me pass, I will not see them die!"

After this sad and harrowing experience, he became more moderate in his views and consequently aroused the suspicions of his colleagues.

He incurred the mortal enmity of St. Just by saying that "one may see by his gait and in his deportment that he looks upon his head as the cor-

ner-stone of the republic, and that he carries it with reverence upon his shoulders like the Holy Sacrament." "I will make him carry his in his hand like Saint Denis," snarled St. Just. It was a dangerous game to joke at the expense of your adversaries, if they were in power, in those days of the Red Terror.

He was expelled from the Jacobins, brought before the revolutionary tribunal, and condemned to death. When asked his age, he answered, "I am thirty-three, the age of the sans-culotte Jesus, a critical age for every patriot."

After his arrest, his courage failed him. He had to be dragged by force from before the tribunal. When thrust into the cart to be carried to his execution, he fought like a madman, struggling with the attendants until his shirt was torn from his shoulders. Frantic with rage and fear, he wildly called upon the people to save him. "Do you not remember me? I am Camille! I sounded the tocsin of the Revolution! Do you not know me? Five years ago in the Palais Royal I called the people to liberty." His appeals only provoked shouts of derision. He was showing the white feather, and the crowd had no sympathy in those days of terror for the coward. Danton, the mighty Danton, sat beside him in the tumbril, undismayed. He joked and smiled on his way to death. "Many a revel I have had in my day," he said, "now we will go to sleep." Bitter tears welled up from his heart, but he laughed them down. Courage, Danton! Courage! All Paris is watching you! All the world will mock you if you show the coward! You will

yet have your revenge, for your blood will rise in the throat of Robespierre and choke his utterance.

Danton neither wailed nor begged for mercy; he met his fate and went to his doom like a hero, while Camille, in sad contrast, wild with fear and rage, alternately blubbered like a baby and fumed and raved like a maniac.

Camille Desmoulins, excitable, emotional, passionate, was, however, just the kind of orator to arouse the people, and he made his *début* in the gardens of the Palais Royal at a time and under circumstances that made him, at once, the popular idol as well as the leader of the mob.

Forming in procession, the crowd marched through Paris, shrieking, "To arms! To arms!" Even the French guards fraternized with the people and joined in the cry, "Long live the nation!" "We will defend the king," they declared, "but we will not cut the throats of our fellow-citizens."

The mob, having secured the busts of Necker and the Duke of Orleans from the studio of a statuary named Curtius, paraded through the streets singing their war-cries. Some Swiss and German troops, under the command of the Prince de Lambesc, ran down the crowd and put it to rout, but it only re-formed in greater numbers and with increased courage and defiance.

A squad of German cavalry dashed through the gardens of the Tuileries, which were thronged with citizens quietly enjoying their Sunday evening promenade. Men, women, and children fled for safety in every direction. One old man was knocked down and seriously wounded. Of course,

in the excitement stories were greatly exaggerated, and the city was filled with rumors that increased the bitterness and the anger of the people. Mutiny added to the general disorder. A conflict took place between a detachment of the French Guards and a squad of Lambesc's German troops. The latter were scattered after the first volley.

The day closed and darkness fell upon the city. It was a night of terror and dismay. Respectable citizens early sought their homes, blinds were drawn and doors were barred. The palaces of the great were sacked. Bands of desperate men prowled through the aristocratic quarters applying the torch, and soon the sky was reddened by the glare from the burning buildings. Robber ruffians, taking advantage of the general confusion, perpetrated all kinds of excesses. Rapine, arson, and murder held high carnival. The municipal authorities were powerless to preserve order. Morning at last dawned. The lawless ceased their depredations and, like wolves, sneaked out of sight to their caves and tenements, impatiently awaiting the return of darkness.

Daylight brought temporary relief.

When the news reached Versailles of the disturbances in Paris, the court became indignant and threatening in its attitude, and the Assembly anxious. But when the deputies recovered from their astonishment, they were none the less determined than they had been. They petitioned the king to recall the dismissed ministers and to abandon the employment of troops.

"Let us make the constitution," cried the Count

de Virieu, "let us renew, confirm, and consecrate the glorious decrees of the 17th of June, let us unite ourselves in sentiment and swear to be faithful to the vows we have taken." The Duke de Rochefoucauld emphatically declared, "The constitution shall be made, or we shall cease to be." In the presence of impending dangers, the deputies evinced a spirit of determination that encouraged the whole nation. They faced the future with heroic resolve. "All recollection of their divisions was effaced, all their efforts were united for the salvation of the country."

A deputation that waited on the king respectfully requested the recall of Necker, the dismissal of the troops, and the establishment of a militia of citizens, but the king, still under the influence and control of the queen's party, gave no satisfactory answer, and the committee returned empty-handed.

The deputies of the Assembly, fearing that if they adjourned, the hall might, in their absence, be seized by the royal troops, resolved to hold a continuous session. By lot, it was decided which deputies should sit during the day and which by night. To relieve the president, the Archbishop of Vienne, whose years were many and whose health was feeble, it was agreed that a vice-president should be selected, and to this position La Fayette was chosen to preside over the night sessions.

The deputies calmly occupied their seats, preserved a serene demeanor, conducted the proceedings with regularity, and by their inflexible conduct gained the approbation of the people and even the respect of the court. Their courage instilled a

wholesome fear into the minds of the queen's blustering ministers, one of whom had made the idle boast that he would bridle the Assembly and subdue Paris in three days. At no period of the Revolution did the Assembly display greater fortitude and wisdom and maintain so high a degree of dignity.

On Monday, the 13th, Paris was awake at an early hour after a night of anxiety and terror. About six o'clock the bells began ringing from all the steeples, sounding an alarm, for Paris expected an attack from the royal troops. Citizens poured out of their houses, gathered in crowds, listened to inflammatory orators, and then scattered in every direction to find arms and ammunition.

Tramps and beggars came from the surrounding country, crowding through the gates and barriers of the city, eager to take part in the pillage. Jails were broken open, unfortunate debtors released, but criminals found no sympathy with the crowd and were returned to their cells. In one instance, when the prisoners had overpowered the guards and were battering down the doors of the dungeon, the patriots having been appealed to for help, turned their guns upon the rogues and quickly quelled the mutiny. "The mob itself," says Mignet, "disarmed suspected characters."

The monastery of St. Lazare, which contained a great quantity of grain, was sacked by the mobs, and crowds of famished wretches gorged themselves with food and wine which they had found in the pantry and cellars. The grain, however, about fifty wagon loads, was hauled away to be sold for the benefit of the poor.

"It would be difficult," writes Bertrand de Molleville, "to paint the disorder, fermentation, and alarm that prevailed in the capital during this dreadful day. Imagine detachments of cavalry and dragoons making their way through different parts of the town at full gallop, to the posts assigned them; trains of artillery rolling over the pavement with monstrous noise; bands of ill-armed ruffians and women drunk with brandy, running through the streets like furies, breaking the shops open and spreading terror everywhere by their howlings, mingled with frequent reports from guns or pistols fired in the air; all the barriers on fire; thousands of smugglers taking advantage of the tumult, to hurry in their goods; the alarm bells ringing in almost all the churches; a great part of the citizens shutting themselves up at home, loading their guns and burying their money, papers, and valuable effects in cellars and gardens; and during the night the town paraded by numerous patrols of citizens of every class and of both sexes,—for many women were seen with muskets or pikes on their shoulders."

In the midst of this excitement, the patriots were at work organizing the Parisian Guard. All citizens were notified to enroll their names. Every district had its battalion, every battalion had its leader, and the supreme command of this body of citizen soldiery was offered to the Duke d'Aumont. He requested to be given twenty-four hours for consideration, but finally declining the honor, the Marquis de la Fayette was unanimously chosen.

Evening approached, and as the darkness in-

creased, the tumult of the city gradually subsided to a low murmur like unto the growl of a tired but angry beast.

The terrifying scenes of the previous night were not to be repeated, for the streets were patrolled by sentinels, and in every direction torches, enveloped in gloom, shed a lurid light, bright enough, however, to reveal the presence of sneaking marauders, and to prevent their depredations. Paris was awake and feverish and through that long summer night was waiting anxiously and impatiently for the coming dawn. It came at last, and the day was ushered in by the ringing of alarm bells from every church-tower and steeple.

There was a feeling of relief when it was known that the army of the great Broglie had not yet appeared at the gates of the city. The watchers through the night had been listening to hear the beat of the drums and the steady tramp of the approaching armies of the king. Shops were closed, business was suspended and multitudes of people thronged the streets ready for any enterprise.

The cry "to arms" was still ringing in the air. The people had appealed to Flesselles, the Mayor of the old municipality, the Provost of the Merchants, to aid them in their search for arms, but he was loyal to the king and started the people on false trails. For this deception he ultimately paid forfeit with his head. He had delayed the people by excuses, he had deceived them by promises, hoping that time would soothe their fury, but at last, in the very presence of the king's troops, stationed in the Champ de Mars, the mob broke into the Hotel

des Invalides, and in spite of the earnest entreaties of the governor, secured and carried away twenty-eight thousand guns, a number of pieces of artillery, and great quantities of swords, sabres, and halberds. The people, having succeeded in procuring arms, next desired a place or something to attack. On the 13th, the day before, there had frequently been heard the cry: "To the Bastile!"

De Launay, a brave old soldier, who had served his king with honor, having been warned by the cries of the mob, made every preparation to repel an attack, and put his fortress in a complete state of defence. At midnight, just as the bells from the steeples were tolling the hour, De Launay climbed the staircase leading to the tower, and looked down upon the fretful city. Finding no cause for alarm, he bade the sentinels on guard "good night," and descended to his quarters to take his last sleep on earth, never dreaming of danger, for he knew his castle could withstand the siege and the assaults of armies.

In a few hours De Launay, the sentinels, and the gloomy fortress will be only memories.

Had the old soldier gone to the tower in the early part of the afternoon of the 14th he would have seen all Paris, as if actuated by one impulse, rushing to the Bastile. He would have witnessed a scene that would have appalled his heart, stout as it was.

Behold that black mass rolling out of Saint Antoine like a mighty ocean, its waves already lapping the foundation stones of that impregnable fortress! And not only from Saint Antoine, but

out of every district, from every quarter the tide surges on, gathering force and volume as it moves, its multitudinous voices shrieking in desperate resolve to level to the ground this "old cavern of kings!" But the sea beats against the rock and, for a time, is stayed.

The governor declined to surrender. This decision, under the circumstances, was clearly in the line of his duty, but having made up his mind to defend the castle committed to his care he should have fought to the death. He, unquestionably, could have held out until reinforcements came, for he had ammunition and stores sufficient to withstand a lengthy siege. He was, however, fighting not an army, not a public enemy, but his fellow-citizens, and that created a doubt in his mind as to what course of action he should pursue. The old soldier wavered, he parleyed when he should have fought. The defence was only half-hearted; when sorely pressed, he opened fire but once, just enough to enrage the mob without repulsing it. Angered at the sight of blood, it returned to the attack, scaled the outer wall, battered down the drawbridges and entered into the inner court-yard. De Launay, with lighted torch, ran to the magazine to blow up the fortress, but his soldiers seized him and prevented this catastrophe. It would have been better for all of them if he had succeeded in his purpose. The mob kept pushing on; the white flag was hoisted, but before surrender an agreement was made with the leaders that the governor and garrison should not be molested, but alas! this agreement was broken almost before the words were

spoken. Unfortunately, the Swiss opened fire after the flag of truce was hoisted, and the crowd, frenzied with rage, gave no quarter.

"The Bastile has fallen!" was the glorious news that greeted the ear of humanity the world over. "Bastile and tyranny," says Michelet, "were in every language synonymous terms. Every nation, at the news of its destruction, believed it had recovered its liberty."

"In Russia, that empire of mystery and silence, that monster Bastile between Europe and Asia, scarcely had the news arrived, when you might have seen men of every nation shouting and weeping for joy in the open streets." The fact that this excess of joy occurred in St. Petersburg is vouched for by a witness above suspicion, the Count de Ségur, who at that time was ambassador to the Court of the Czar, and who, being a royalist, in no wise shared in the general enthusiasm. "No other event," says Willert, "was ever hailed with a tithe of the enthusiasm which the fall of the Bastile excited, from the banks of the Neva to those of the Mississippi." That prison, whose fetid dungeons had confined such wretchedness and despair, "so many broken hearts, so many tears of rage and heads dashed against the stones," had at last fallen under the assaults of the people whose liberty and lives it had ever menaced. No longer would its "dark, deep dungeons, where the prisoners, on a level with the common sewers, lived besieged and menaced by rats, toads, and every kind of foul vermin," hold and hide the secrets and mysteries of tyranny.

There is force, tremendous force, in the shout

of an incensed and infuriated mob. It struck terror into the hearts of the governor and the garrison, so that the gloomy dungeon was shaken to its base. The Grecian hosts upon one occasion, so history states, set up such a shout that the birds fell dead out of the heavens.

Who would have thought that this mighty fortress, bristling with cannon, rock-ribbed from turret to foundation stone, fortified, garrisoned, supplied with stores and ammunition sufficient to have withstood the siege and assault of an army, would have fallen so quickly before the shout of the multitude. It was not besieged by an army of disciplined soldiers, but by a mob without order, organization or leadership. "And it shall come to pass . . . that the people shall shout with a great shout and the walls of the city shall fall down flat." As before the walls of Jericho, so it was before the walls of the Bastile.

While these events were transpiring in Paris, what was going on at Versailles? Couriers had not yet brought to the court the news from the capital. The ministers were making out a list of deputies who were to be proscribed. Some were to be seized and tried as traitors to their king; others were to be banished, and, in fine, the Assembly was to be coerced, and if it refused to yield, was to be scattered to the four corners of the earth.

In the orangerie the royal troops are drinking, carousing, singing roundelays, and dancing to their own wild music. The queen must needs encourage her loyal troops, and so with her friend, Madame de Polignac, she pays them a visit. Her

presence arouses their loyalty and enthusiasm, and they toast their queen with wine poured into their goblets by her own fair hands. She conducts the officers to her apartments and excites them with liquor till they vow to lay down their lives in her defence and her honor.

The king has gone to bed.

Suddenly a body of cavalry with the Prince de Lambesc at their head, fleeing before the fury of the people, dash into the town, having galloped in hot haste all the way from Paris. Some couriers arrive bringing the details of the day's occurrences. The bluster and brag of Breteuil and Broglie suddenly subside. The queen's party is thrown into a panic.

The king was asleep, sound asleep, when the news came announcing the fall of the Bastile. The Duke de Liancourt, who had the entrée to the king's apartments at all hours, day or night, awoke Louis out of his heavy slumber and detailed to him the thrilling events of that momentous day. Louis, rubbing his eyes, exclaimed, "It is a revolt." "No, Sire," said Liancourt, "it is not a revolt; it is a revolution." The duke, who loved the king, gave him some wholesome advice and then left him to slumber until daylight.

When the news reached the Assembly, it was proposed to send another deputation to the king. "No," said Clermont Tonnerre, "leave him the night to consult in,—kings must buy experience as well as other men."

The Assembly, on the 15th, appointed a deputation to wait again on the king, and as the twenty-

four deputies were about to depart on their errand, Mirabeau in his most dramatic and impassioned manner exclaimed: "Tell him that the hordes of strangers who invest us received yesterday visits, caresses, exhortations, and presents from the princes, princesses, and favorites; tell him that, during the night, these foreign satellites, gorged with gold and wine, predicted in their impious songs the subjection of France and invoked the destruction of the National Assembly; tell him that in his own palace courtiers danced to the sound of that barbarous music, and that such was the prelude to the massacre of St. Bartholomew! Tell him that the Henry whose memory is known throughout the universe, him whom of all his ancestors he said he would make his model, sent provisions into rebellious Paris when besieging it in person, while the savage advisers of Louis send away the corn which trade brings into his loyal and starving city."

Just at that moment, Louis, attended only by his brothers, entered the outer hall of the Assembly. The news of his coming was received by the delighted deputies with every evidence of joy. "Let not your applause be premature," said Mirabeau to his enthusiastic colleagues. "Let us wait till his Majesty makes known the good intentions we are led to expect from him. The blood of our brethren flows in Paris. Let a sad respect be the first reception given to the king by the representatives of an unfortunate people. The silence of the people is the lesson of kings."

The deputies received his Majesty respectfully

but without demonstration. In a few moments, however, he gained the confidence and won the applause of the Assembly, when he declared that he was one with the nation, and that he had ordered the troops to leave Paris and Versailles; that he would recall Necker, and that on the morrow he would visit his capital.

A committee of one hundred members was at once appointed to precede the king to Paris and announce his coming. The king set out on the 17th; he reached the city about three o'clock in the afternoon. He was met at the gates by Bailly, who had been chosen Mayor. "Sire," said Bailly, "I bring your Majesty the keys of your good town of Paris; they are the same that were presented to Henry IV.; he had reconquered his people; now the people have reconquered their king."

He was received at first in a sullen mood, but when he entered the Hotel de Ville, unattended by his guard and submitted to being decorated with the cockade of the Revolution, the enthusiasm of the people knew no bounds. The king unconditionally surrendered to the rebels.

Louis was weak in character, but he was not a timid man. It required great courage to enter the capital at this time, in view of public sentiment and the temper of the populace. He took his life in his hands. It seems strange that a man who could, on occasion, display such courage, had so little decision of character.

Louis, glad to escape from the affectionate attention of his loyal subjects,—some of whom stopped his horses and drank his health out of bottles, one

jolly fat fish-woman going so far as to hug his Majesty,—journeyed back to Versailles and reached the palace about nine o'clock in the evening, a sadder but not a wiser man.

The queen, who had never expected to see him return alive, welcomed him with every manifestation of joy, but when she saw the tri-color pinned to his coat, which Louis had forgotten to remove, she exclaimed in bitterness and with scorn in every word she uttered: "I did not know until this moment I had married a plebeian." Oh! proud queen, if the veil of the future had been lifted, you would have seen that the time was coming when your Louis, in his own palace, surrounded by a jeering and an insolent rabble, would wear for hours a sweaty, dirty red cap of a smutty Jacobin.

The fall of the Bastile and the revolt of Paris shattered the hopes of the royalists. The violent measures agreed upon by the court party, that had already given enthusiastic courage to the queen, were immediately abandoned.

On the day Louis returned from Paris, the first exodus of the nobles took place,—Madame de Polignac, the dear and devoted friend of the queen; the Count of Artois, the brother of the king; Breteuil, he of the heavy voice and step; Broglie, the blusterer who threatened to burn Paris; Lambesc, the roysterer who charged through the gardens of the Tuileries on that memorable Sunday evening, the twelfth,—all fled ignominiously across the border to find a sanctuary in Turin, leaving Louis and Marie Antoinette to bear the burden alone.

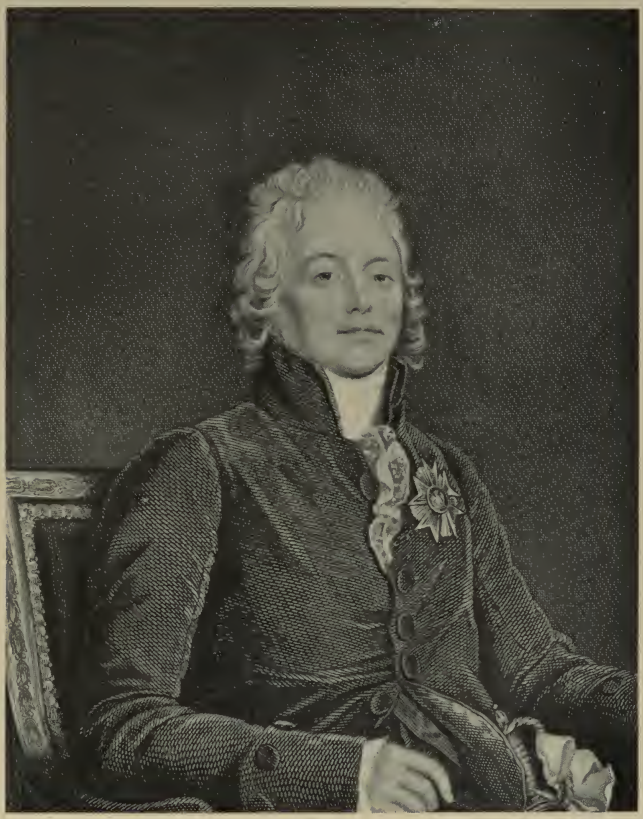
"Hollow men, like horses hot at hand,
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle;
But when they should endure the bloody spur,
They fall their crests, and like deceitful jades,
Sink in the trial."

"Noblesse oblige" was a motto that they mocked in their mad desire to escape from danger. Their dastardly conduct was, perhaps, the origin of the phrase, "taking French leave."

At the first sign of danger, at a time when the king and the queen specially needed their advice, sympathy, and assistance, these faithful(?) friends deserted them like a pack of poltroons. "Sauve qui peut" was the cry at Waterloo, but not until the Emperor's fortunes were lost; even then, the old guard refused to surrender.

The desertion was so cowardly that it disgusted even Talleyrand. He pleaded with the Count of Artois to reconsider his determination, and not to abandon the king at this critical moment; but it was of no avail. The noble count feared the loss of his head more than the loss of his honor. It must have been an edifying spectacle to see Talleyrand pleading with a craven in so just a cause. It was seldom the adroit and cunning churchman ever displayed any trait or spirit beyond that of a mere intriguing, deceiving schemer.

Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, elevated to that exalted station by Louis XVI., was one of the most selfish and perfidious creatures that ever basked in the sunshine of royal favor. He never espoused a cause he did not desert or betray. No moral consideration was ever weighed by him, when it stood



TALLEYRAND

From an engraving in the collection of William J. Latta, Esq.

between him and his interest. He brought intrigue and deception to an art, to a science. He had the instincts of a spy and the principles of a traitor. Feared by those who trusted him, he yet became the custodian of their secrets; despised by his masters, he nevertheless enjoyed their favors. His chosen rule of conduct was "Treat your friends as if they would one day be your enemies, and your enemies as if they would one day be your friends." In his code, friendship, loyalty, and patriotism were mere terms to conjure with, but not sentiments to live by. His manner was polished, he was at all times charming and fascinating. Napoleon described him as "a silk stocking filled with excrement." Mirabeau at one time regretted that he was obliged to keep on terms with "a being so vile as Talleyrand, sordid, greedy, and designing, who delighted only in filth and gold, who had sold his honor and his friend, and who would sell his soul if a purchaser could be found for trash so vile."

Immediately after the departure of the noble emigrants, Talleyrand lost no time in going over to the revolutionists, declaring that "everyone must now look out for himself." He had no compunction nor special regret in abandoning the king and the queen, for he always believed that Marie Antoinette had stood between him and a cardinal's hat. If this be true, then she rendered a notable service to the church.

CHAPTER XVII

NECKER RECALLED—HIS RETURN A TRIUMPH—AMNESTY—MIRABEAU EXCUSES VIOLENCE OF THE MOB—THE CONSTITUTION—DECLARATION OF RIGHTS—ABOLITION OF PRIVILEGES—AUGUST THE FOURTH

NECKER's return was a triumph. This was the heyday of his glory, but he immediately weakened his influence and popularity by demanding of the electors of Paris a general amnesty. This was at a time when the mob had assassinated Foulon, and carried his head on a pike, with a wisp of hay in its mouth, through the streets of Paris—the cruel, cold-hearted Foulon who said in the days of famine that grass was food good enough for the starving poor. One is almost induced to call his murder a just retribution.

Necker, no doubt, was actuated by humane and charitable motives, but his conduct was imprudent and impolitic. At a time when the public mind was inflamed against all those that had taken part in opposition to the people, in the events of the fourteenth of July, he further irritated the public temper by requesting clemency for the enemies of the people. Mirabeau assailed Necker, denounced the action of the town council and induced the Assembly to annul the order, contending that it was a question alone for the Assembly's consideration,

and that the municipal authorities had no jurisdiction in the matter.

Instead of demanding an amnesty, Necker should have favored a fair trial for the accused. His request simply turned public sentiment against him and he fell into disfavor at once. "Necker did not know the people; he was not aware how easily they suspect their chiefs and destroy their idols." He heeded not the wise saying of Mirabeau that "It is but a short distance from the Capitol to the Tarpeian Rock."

"What ruined Louis XVI.," says Froment, "was his having philosophers for ministers." Necker was endowed neither with political sense nor worldly sagacity. His great popularity induced him to believe he was a leader, but he really did not possess the first quality of political leadership. His popularity was due to the opposition of the court, and his vanity led him to believe that it was due to his great talents.

After the fall of the Bastile, Mirabeau in his journal apologized for the popular excesses: "How great," he said, "must be the virtue and moderation of the people, since even when the dungeons of the Bastile disclosed the secret atrocities of despotism, they were not provoked to greater bloodshed! The oppressors of the people denounce it and affect to fear it, in order that they may excuse their tyranny and deaden their consciences! If these events had taken place at Constantinople, we should say that this was an act of popular justice; that the punishment of one vizier would be a lesson to others." Mirabeau argued against the facts and

his honest convictions. He encouraged anarchy in his attempt to excuse the massacre of the garrison.

The attack by the people on the Bastile was entirely justified by existing conditions. The king and the nobles were preparing to control the Assembly by force, to intimidate its members by the presence of the military. It was the legislative body of the kingdom, and had been so recognized by the king himself. It had committed no overt act; it had insisted upon exercising those rights and powers that were lawfully delegated to it. Paris was menaced and threatened by the army for no other reason than that it loyally supported the Assembly and favored needed reforms. The people had a right to arm in defence of their city, and to strengthen their defence it was necessary to destroy or secure possession of the fortress that was the stronghold of the enemy and a menace to the public liberty.

On the other hand, the murder of De Launay and the garrison was absolutely without excuse. It was cruel and cowardly and without any justification whatever. They had surrendered and were unarmed. Their only offence was that they had defended property placed in their charge by the existing government. They were assigned to its defence and it was their duty to repel attack so long as they wore the livery of the king or had not given their allegiance to the popular cause. Their assassination was the act of a lawless mob, for no longer were the people engaged in a commendable or justifiable enterprise when they turned from the taking of the fortress to the slaughter of defenceless men. The people had obtained possession of

the Bastile and they owed protection to its defenders who had surrendered. The killing of these men by an infuriated mob was anarchy in its worst form, and was the beginning of the terrors that were to follow.

When leading men and law-abiding citizens excuse crime they simply put a premium on its repetition. No life is safe in that community where the vilest man can be executed without forms of law. It is ever a dangerous policy to dispense with law in the desire to vent a momentary rage or to avenge summarily a public wrong, no matter how heinous in character.

The tiger had tasted blood, and his appetite was whetted for more prey. The mob grew insolent; its spirit increased daily; its ear was deaf; its heart was dead to all appeals for mercy. The authorities, having excused its excesses, forfeited control and even influence over its conduct. In truth, the mob was sovereign, and made so because the authorities had temporized with its violence and excused its crimes.

The Assembly had solemnly sworn to give a constitution to France and not to separate until the task was accomplished. It was a task that called for the exercise of the greatest powers of the intellect, and required a familiarity with the history of states and peoples, and an experience based upon a knowledge of the past. It had to be a constitution that would suit the temperament of the French people and one that would not destroy every trace of the existing government.

It had to preserve the forms, if not the principles, that had long obtained in France. "We are not savages," said Mirabeau, "coming naked from the shores of the Orinoco to form a society. We are an old nation and undoubtedly too old for our epoch. We have a pre-existing government, a pre-existing king, pre-existing prejudices. As far as possible one must adapt the things to the Revolution and avoid abruptness of transition."

There were only a few radical spirits that favored the destruction of the monarchy, and so a form of government had to be framed that would guarantee the equality of all men before the law and at the same time preserve intact the features of a monarchy. In other words, the principles of democracy had to be reconciled to a government at the head of which was a king entitled to his crown by the right of hereditary succession.

Divergent interests of the monarchy, the aristocracy, and the commonalty, made the task a perplexing one. "The founding of an entire constitution," says Thiers, "amid the rubbish of an ancient legislation, in spite of all opposition and the wild flight of many minds, was a great and difficult work."

On July 27, 1789, the committee reported to the Assembly the basis of a constitution. France was to remain a monarchy, the king was to be the depository of executive power, his agents were to be responsible to the people. His sanction was necessary to the laws. No loans could be created and taxes imposed without the consent of the nation. Taxes were to continue only from one States General to another. All property and personal liberty were

sacred. In view of what the conditions had been, this was a great stride in the direction of popular government. The report of the committee was submitted to the Assembly and, straightway, Mounier read the celebrated paper known as "The Declaration of Rights."

"The idea," says Dumont, "was American, and there was scarcely a member who did not consider such a declaration an indispensable preliminary. I well remember the long debate on the subject, which lasted several weeks, as a period of mortal *ennui.* There were silly disputes about words, much metaphysical trash, and dreadfully tedious posing. The Assembly had converted itself into a Sorbonne, and each apprentice in the art of legislation was trying his yet unfledged wings upon such puerilities."

Mirabeau was appointed a member of the Committee of Five to prepare the Declaration, and Dumont, with his usual modesty, states that Mirabeau, Duroverai, Claviere and he began "writing, disputing, and wasting time and patience on this ridiculous subject." He terms it a "puerile fiction," and, with a great show of wisdom, says that "A declaration of rights could be made only after the framing of the constitution, for rights exist in virtue of laws, and therefore do not precede them." This is a mere quibble. The Declaration was simply to announce what the political rights of the people were or ought to be. He divides words "twixt south and southwest side" when he sneers at the maxim that all men are born free and equal. He says this is not true. Of course not, in many senses, but the Declaration stated that "men are

born equal in respect to their rights," their political rights. No one should gainsay this proposition. The Revolution had for its object the securing to the people, to all the people, this guarantee. Morally, mentally, and physically, men are not born equal, and no one is foolish enough to argue that they are. When Jefferson wrote in the American Declaration of Independence that " all men are created equal," he meant to say that they are created equal under the law, or, as the French Declaration puts it, " in respect to their rights."

Mirabeau proposed to defer consideration on the Declaration until the constitution should be adopted; perhaps in this contention, he had been influenced by Dumont's reasoning, for it is a fact that when the matter was originally discussed he had strongly urged the necessity of a Declaration. He threw the Assembly into confusion when he predicted that " any declaration of rights anterior to the constitution will prove but the almanac of a single year." He was blowing hot and cold, and he called down upon himself the censure of the very men who had favored his selection as a member of the committee.

The Declaration of Rights, however, was promulgated, and in some quarters was most enthusiastically approved, and in others most bitterly denounced. Marat and Robespierre were among its most ardent supporters, and pronounced it the one good piece of work of the Assembly.

In some particulars, it was vapory, of course, as all such papers are, but it contained much of the substance of truth and justice. It was a reiteration

of the ideas of the philosophers who had been dreaming of a Utopia, and who had been instilling revolutionary principles for a century into the minds of the people.

At a time when tyranny and intolerance were rank among the nations of Europe, the Assembly of the French people declared that men are born equal in respect to their rights; that the people are sovereign; that no individual nor body of men may exercise any authority save that delegated by the people; that no person should be molested on account of his opinions—political or religious—provided he does not disturb the public order; that all persons are privileged to write, speak, and publish, being responsible only for the abuse of the privilege. France was unbourbonized.

The next step in the Revolution was the abolition of privileges, which abolition took place on the night of the 4th of August, a night which an enemy of the Revolution designated, at the time, as "The Saint Bartholomew of property." "It was, however," said Mignet, "only the Saint Bartholomew of abuses." Feudal rights, game laws, tithes, seignorial courts, pensions, exemptions,—all were abolished by decree of the Assembly. In a spirit of patriotism, individual sacrifices were made for the sake of the public welfare, while provinces and towns surrendered their franchises and solemnly renounced their privileges. "The rich clergy gave nothing; the poor curés offered to renounce their fees. The Assembly, deeply affected, refused to accept the sacrifice." A wave of enthusiasm swept through the convention that carried with it the abo-

lition of abuses and the destruction of systems that for generations had burdened France and had made her government a by-word and a reproach. It was hailed as the dawning of a new era, the realization of the hopes of centuries.

The generosity was occasioned by a report detailing the excesses in the provinces, the burning of chateaux and the robbery and murder perpetrated by bands of marauding peasants or banditti. A liberal nobleman began the work, declaring that sacrifices must be made to secure safety and tranquillity in the provinces and immunity from the depredations of a furious peasantry.

Dumont, in referring to that extraordinary session which he attended and which he calls "the nocturnal sitting of the 4th of August," says: "Never was so much work done in so short a space of time. . . . I know not how many laws were decreed,—the abolition of feudal rights, tithes and provincial privileges, three questions embracing a whole system of jurisprudence and politics, were, with ten or twelve others, disposed of in less time than the English Parliament would decide upon the first reading of any bill of consequence. The Assembly resembled a dying man who had made his will in a hurry, or to speak more plainly, each member gave away what did not belong to him and prided himself on his generosity at the expense of others." Rivarol, in referring to that memorable night, said: "The representatives of the nobility and the clergy sought, like Japanese, their honor in public suicide." You may describe the scene as an orgy, as Mirabeau did, but feudalism in France died that night.

Although Dumont rather sneeringly refers to the proceedings of that memorable session, it marked, nevertheless, the beginning of a new era. Mirabeau described the enthusiasm as "madness," and said: "This is just the character of our Frenchmen,—they are three months disputing about syllables (alluding to the weary discussion on the Declaration of Rights), and in a single night they overturn the whole venerable edifice of the monarchy." He left the Assembly before it was seized with the delirium, and took no part in the proceedings, and although he did not approve of all that had been done, he wrote: "I have good hope for the future, because the Revolution, whether we approve it or not, is now an accomplished fact. Intelligent men must now see that further resistance is useless and disastrous."

Siéyès, in a notable speech, violently opposed the abolition of tithes, but he made no impression on the Assembly. He concluded with a sentence that became famous: "They would be free, and know not how to be just." In conversation with Mirabeau, he spoke most warmly on the matter and denounced the whole proceeding. Mirabeau in reply, said: "My dear abbé, you have let loose the bull, and you now complain that he gores you."

But the generosity had gone too far, and it was too late to retrace the steps. It only created in the public mind a desire for further concessions. Dumont wisely and tersely says that "what is granted through fear never satisfies, and they whom you think your concessions will disarm, acquire tenfold confidence and audacity."

CHAPTER XVIII

PROGRESS OF THE REVOLUTION—MIRABEAU'S PART IN THE EVENTS—MAURY—CAZALÈS—ASSEMBLY'S ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE—ADDRESS TO THE KING

The Revolution had been making wonderful progress. Intrigue and force had both been employed against it, but the leaders of the royal cause had, in every instance, been circumvented and defeated. Who would have been bold enough to predict, at the time of the first meeting of the States General, that in three months such results could have been reached, such reforms effected?

On the 17th of June the three orders had disappeared and the States General had merged into the National Assembly. The royal authority had been defied on the 23d of June and the king surrendered to the popular will. The moral influence of his royal power was destroyed. His absolutism was a thing of the past. The fall of the Bastile on the 14th of July deprived the king of all physical force, and, surrendering first to the Assembly, he hastened to Paris to make his peace with the people who had conquered him.

On August 4 the abuses and burdens that had grown and developed for centuries into a system of tyranny were abolished in a few hours of enthusiastic and patriotic sacrifice.

"What do you complain of, Jacques?" was the

question asked the peasant in 1789. "Of monks, pigeons, and taxes," was the answer. The monks had been deprived of their tithes, pigeons could be shot, and the feudal taxes and burdens had been abolished.

The Revolution had successfully accomplished its purposes, and if it had stopped here, after securing and firmly establishing the reforms, it would have more than met the hopes and the expectations of the most ardent reformers who clamored for a change at the time of the first meeting of the States General. These ends had been attained because of the weak and vacillating course of Louis, and on the other hand, it must be admitted that they were secured because of the determined and decisive attitude and policy of the Assembly.

The king had insisted upon a separation of the orders when he could not nor dared not enforce his commands. The privileged orders had united with the commons at a time when their influence was lost. The court party decided to resort to force when the people were ready and able to resist. The king and the privileged orders, when they did the right thing, always did it at the wrong time. Even when they surrendered, it was not only a surrender on their part, but they made it an overwhelming victory on the part of the commons.

During this period, Mirabeau had played a leading role. He was the boldest and most intrepid leader in the Assembly. Adam Duquesnoy, a delegate to the States General, in describing Mirabeau during the early sessions of that body, said: "The man is a wild beast, a madman. He has the expres-

sions of a tiger. When he speaks it is in paroxysms; his face is distorted, his voice hisses with passion,—moreover, he speaks ill; his French is detestable; his arguments are sophistical, full of inconsistencies and fallacies. All men of intelligence believe that he wishes to bring about the dissolution of the estates and the fall of the ministry because Necker would not pay him his price." But this madman was gradually impressing himself upon the Assembly, for the same Duquesnoy later on said: "Mirabeau excels all his colleagues in talents, genius, and knowledge," and still later on, he declared that "Mirabeau alone has the genius, the talents and the strength of character to extricate us from the fearful chaos into which we are plunged. The circumstances are such that he must be minister. Yet perhaps a short delay is necessary in order that the public may recognize that private immorality is no obstacle to public virtue."

This shows a remarkable change of opinion, and, no doubt, Duquesnoy fairly represented the feelings of a large majority of the delegates. The opinion entertained by him of Mirabeau was that entertained not only by the members of the Assembly, but also by the people. Mirabeau had the spirit and the power of the born leader. The public, from the very beginning, had recognized his ability, but it took some little time to compel a just recognition upon the part of his colleagues. The latter did not doubt his talents in some directions, but they had no confidence in his honor and intentions, nor did they comprehend how great was his genius as a statesman. Mistrusted from the beginning, it required

MIRABEAU IN THE TRIBUNE

From an engraving in the collection of William J. Latta, Esq.
After a painting by Delaroche

time and opportunity to remove this mistrust and to reveal his real purpose as a representative of the liberal cause. He soon had a chance to display his superior talents and to prove his loyalty to the principles he had espoused. Bold, intrepid, and audacious, he commanded admiration even where he could not secure respect, and with his strong personality he, in time, dominated the convention. When an emergency arose and sudden action was required, he was always equal to the occasion. No one can measure the effect produced upon the public mind when he told the messenger of the king that the representatives of the people would not obey his Majesty's order. He put in apt and forceful phrase the decision of the Assembly, and his words rang through the realm like the blast of a trumpet. Without that defiance and disobedience of the royal command, the privileged orders could have joined the commons without humiliation, but this made their acquiescence a complete surrender.

The royalists displayed no political wisdom. Even when the orders were united the aristocratic party was deficient in leadership. They had no one in their ranks who could, for an instant, cope with Mirabeau in energy, resources, or debate. In politics and statesmanship he could outweigh a dozen of their strongest men. Maury, representing the clergy, and Cazalès, the nobility, were the ablest and bravest defenders of the privileged orders.

Abbé Maury, the son of a shoemaker, won his seat in the States General by professing liberal ideas, and after being returned as a deputy he opposed the union of the orders and became the most

pronounced advocate of the exemptions and privileges of the church. He was a subtle, close debater, but no match for Mirabeau. "When he is right," said Mirabeau, "we argue: when he is wrong, I crush him." So bitter and persistent was he in his opposition to reform that he was detested by the people, and several times was close to a lamp-post execution. His ready wit saved him upon one occasion when he was threatened with death *a la lanterne*. Turning to the mob, he said: "Well, and when you have put me in the place of the lamp, shall you see any clearer for that, do you think?" A general laugh followed this remark, and he was left unmolested. He had courage and was cool-headed under all circumstances, whether in danger or in debate, in the presence of an angry mob or in an excited assembly. He departed the country in time to save his head, espoused the cause of Napoleon, and spent his last days in the dungeon of St. Angelo, having been imprisoned by order of the pope.

Cazalès won his seat as a deputy after a stubborn fight. He was a cavalry officer and the son of a judge of the Parliament of Toulouse. Although a devoted royalist, he had some peculiar notions about the divinity of the king which did not suit the views of the nobility of the old order, and he did not always possess their confidence. He was, however, an orator of a high degree, and if he had not been cursed by indolence and weakened by dissipation, he would, by reason of his talents, have been a worthy opponent of the strongest men in the Assembly.

The court party made no effort to win the people. Their only purpose was to save the king, the monarchy, the old order. They evinced no spirit of concession or conciliation. There were many liberal nobles who fully realized what the conditions meant, but they seemed to exert no influence upon the court. The first sign of liberalism on the part of a nobleman put him outside the pale of the royal circle and placed him under suspicion. On the other hand the commons, at this time, were politic in their conduct, were patient under insult and insolence, and won to their cause the conservatives of all classes by the display of a temperate, loyal, and patriotic spirit.

What greater wisdom, for instance, could have been shown, after the union of the orders on the 27th, than the adoption of a resolution proposed by Mirabeau that the Assembly should issue an address to the people, counseling moderation and political tolerance. "Fellow-citizens, whose aim, like ours, is the public good, but who seek it in another direction; men who, under the sway of the prejudices of education and of the habits of childhood, have not the strength to turn against the stream, who tremble for their property, who fear that liberty may be the pretext of license, all such men deserve that we should treat them with consideration. . . . Our fate depends on our wisdom. Nothing but our violence can imperil that liberty which reason secures to us."

Another wise and politic move was the appeal by the Assembly to the king to withdraw the troops after their mobilization at Versailles, and when the

bridge had been seized between that city and Paris. Mirabeau moved the address to the king, describing to his Majesty "the vivid alarm which has been felt in the Assembly because of the abuse which has been made of the king's name, in order to permit the approach to the capital and to this city of Versailles of an artillery train and of enormous bodies of troops, foreign and national, which troops are quartered in neighboring villages and in fixed camps in the neighborhood of these two cities."

Mirabeau in his speech upon this question clearly proved that from every point of view the court party was making a mistake in placing the army in sight of the disturbances of Paris; that the soldiers, men of the people, would soon become affected by the popular spirit and the discipline and loyalty of the army would be ruined by party influence, differences, and controversy.

The address to the king was humble and respectful in its tone, clear in its meaning, and earnest in its purpose. In substance it said: "Sire, you have asked the National Assembly to repose in you its confidence; this surpasses their fondest hopes. We therefore come to confide in your Majesty our great fears. But, Sire, we do not crave your protection, —that would be offending your sense of justice. We have our fears, and they arise from the purest patriotism; they are connected with the interests of our constituents, with the public peace, and with the happiness of our beloved monarch.

"In the generous feelings of your heart, Sire, may be found the real salvation of the French people. When the troops, marching from all quarters,

camped around us investing the capital, we asked ourselves with astonishment, ' Does the king doubt the fidelity of his people? What is the meaning of this threatening display? Where are the enemies of the state and the throne who are to be subdued? Where are the rebels and plotters that have to be kept down? A unanimous cry comes up from the capital, yea, from the whole kingdom, ' We love our king and we thank God for the gift of his love.'

" How is it possible, Sire, to make you doubt the love and attachment of your subjects? Have you ever spilled their blood? Are you cruel or implacable? Have you betrayed the cause of justice? Do the people blame you for their misfortunes, or name you as the cause of their calamities? Has any one ever told you that the people chafe under the yoke of Bourbon sway? No, no, they cannot have done so.

" Your majesty has recently seen how your subjects quieted down after the recent agitations and how the public peace was restored by one word from you. If the peace had been broken by the employment of force the blood of your subjects would have been shed in torrents.

" But the kindly word of peace came straight from your heart and your subjects are proud that they have never opposed your rule. It is noble to govern by such means; this was the empire possessed by Louis IX., Louis XII., and Henry IV., and is the only one which is worthy of you. This is the only empire that it will be possible to establish in France. We should deceive you if we were not bold enough to tell you this.

" Our opponents will say, ' In what manner does the presence of the troops constitute a danger? Why should the Assembly complain? They should be incapable of cowardice.

" Sire, the danger is pressing, is universal. The danger threatens the provinces. If they become alarmed as to our freedom, we know of no curb that will hold them. Distance exaggerates everything; it doubles all anxieties, embitters and envenoms them.

" The danger threatens the capital. How will a people, hungry and impoverished, be willing to divide their subsistence with a threatening soldiery? The presence of the troops will irritate the temper of the people and the first act of violence committed under the pretext of keeping order may be the beginning of a series of horrible misfortunes.

" We of the Assembly are but men. There is contagion in excitement; we may be governed by violent and unreasoning counsels; calm and cool wisdom do not deliver their oracles in the midst of tumult, disorders, and quarrels.

" Sire, we are always ready to obey you because you rule us in the name of Justice; our fidelity is beyond all limit, as it is without suspicion.

" Sire, we implore you in the name of the nation, in the name of your happiness and of your glory, send back your soldiers to their posts from whence your counsellors have dragged them. Send back the artillery, which is only intended to defend the frontiers against invasion, and which is never to be used to intimidate your loyal subjects; above all things, Sire, send away those foreign troops, those

mercenaries, whom we pay to protect but not to trouble our hearths. Your majesty does not need them. How can a monarch who is adored by twenty millions of Frenchmen surround his throne at great cost with a few thousand foreigners?

"Sire, in the midst of your children be guarded by their love."

Alas! it was not this manly, patriotic appeal that caused the dispersion of the troops. The uprising of the people, not their kind words, nor affectionate appeals, commanded the attention of the king.

"Have the reckless men that counsel Louis," said Mirabeau, "studied the causes and the course of revolutions in the past? Do they not know that the wisest are often carried beyond the limits of moderation and that a frenzied people are hurried towards excesses by a dreadful impulse from which at first thought they would have shrunk in horror?"

If the king had had a wise adviser and a strong leader at his side at this period the Revolution could have been directed into a peaceful channel. Even after the fall of the Bastile, the loyalty of the people was most marked. If the king had been politic, if he had said the right word at the right time, if he had shown some spirit, some sincerity, some precision and decision of character, he could have won the people, and saved his crown as well as his head, but he was like a mere log floating on the waters; he was helpless. The reforms that he would have guaranteed would have been secured to the people only a little earlier and he would be honored in history as the reformer instead of being pitied as the victim of the Revolution.

Immediately after the fall of the Bastile was the time for the king to win over his people. His royalist friends had abandoned him at the first sign of real danger; they had scattered like rats from a sinking ship, and there was no longer any reason why he should not, regardless of their views and interests, have made an honorable peace with his people.

CHAPTER XIX

NECKER PROPOSES INCOME TAX OF TWENTY-FIVE PER CENT.—MIRABEAU SUPPORTS NECKER—MIRABEAU SEEKS POPULARITY IN THE DISTRICTS—HIS AMBITION TO BE A MINISTER

Necker, who had been endeavoring to devise some scheme that would relieve the financial condition of the country, brought forward on September 24, 1789, a measure providing for an income tax of twenty-five per cent. Several of his former proposals had met with disaster, but this time he had the support of Mirabeau, who summoned all his energy to urge the adoption of the measure, and never did the great tribune, in all his career, rise to grander heights of eloquence. Three times he spoke in the debate, and the last time he swept away all opposition. So deep an impression did he make on the Assembly that no one even attempted to reply. He predicted a national bankruptcy if this plan were rejected and appealed to the Assembly to pass it as it came from the hands of the minister, without the slightest alteration or modification.

Dumont, in describing the scene, says: "The triumph was complete. The Assembly were subjugated by the power of a superior and an energetic mind, which acts upon the multitude as if it were only a single individual, and the project was

adopted without a dissenting voice." Dumont says further: "The force with which he presented so commonplace a subject was miraculous; he elevated it to sublimity. Those who heard this speech will never forget it; it excited every gradation of terror, and a devouring gulf with the groans of the victims it swallowed, of which the orator gave a very appalling description, seemed pictured to the senses of the audience."

The *Journal de Paris*, in describing the effect produced by the dramatic eloquence of the orator upon the Assembly, quotes the compliment paid by Æschines to his great rival, Demosthenes: "What would you have felt had you been present and heard the beast!" It was the greatest oratorical effort ever made in the National Assembly, from the beginning to the close of that congress of remarkable orators.

Dumont writes: "From that day Mirabeau was considered as a being superior to other men. He had no rival; there were, indeed, other orators, but he alone was eloquent; and this impression was stronger because in his speech on this question he was obliged to depend entirely upon his own resources, for it was an unexpected reply, and could not, therefore, have been prepared."

This was the reason of its success. Had he carefully written his speech and committed it to memory, it would have been mere declamation. But his mood, the occasion, the theme, were ripe for the effort, and he spoke living, burning words that came red-hot from his soul. No care that had polished his words, adjusted his phrases and sentences,

and regulated his gestures, could have produced such an effect.

Molé, the celebrated actor at the *Theatre Français*, was present, and was wrought up to great enthusiasm and admiration. He came forward to offer his compliments. "Ah! Monsieur le Comte," said he, visibly affected and in a pathetic tone of voice, "what a speech! and with what an accent did you deliver it! You have surely missed your vocation." The poor actor had mistaken real eloquence for declamation, and strange to say, Mirabeau was much flattered by the compliment.

Such a speech, when read in cold type, conveys but a faint idea of the fiery impetuosity of the orator. His voice, his manner, his ardor, the spirit of the occasion, the listening, excited audience, eager to catch every word, are all wanting. In a translation the original, of course, loses much of its native force and meaning, but nevertheless we will give the peroration which produced upon the audience so remarkable an impression. It is as follows:

"Oh, if less solemn declarations did not insure our respect for public faith and our horror of the infamous word bankruptcy, I would search into the secret motives, unknown perhaps to ourselves, which make us draw back at the very instant we are called upon to consummate a great sacrifice; inefficacious, it is true, unless it be sincere; and I would say to those who, from the fear of sacrifices and the dread of taxes, are, perhaps, familiarizing their minds with the idea of not keeping faith with the public creditor: what is such bankruptcy itself

but the most cruel, the most iniquitous, the most unequal, the most ruinous of taxes?

"My friends, listen to a word, a single word! Two centuries of depredations and robbery have dug the gulf into which the kingdom is about to fall. This horrible gulf must be filled up! But how? There is but one way. Here is a list of rich men in France. Choose from among them the richest, in order that you may sacrifice fewer citizens; but choose, at all events, for must not the smaller number perish to save the great mass of the people? Well, these two thousand rich men are possessed of sufficient wealth to make up the deficiency. Restore order to your finances, peace and prosperity to the country,—strike, immolate your victims without pity, throw them into the abyss and it will close. . . . What, do you draw back horror-stricken, ye inconsistent, ye pusillanimous men! Well, then, do you not perceive that in proclaiming a bankruptcy, or, what is yet more odious, in rendering it inevitable without proclaiming it, you will be soiled by an act ten thousand times more criminal, a thing inconceivable, gratuitously criminal? For, after all, that horrible sacrifice would at least wipe off the deficit. And do you imagine, because you will not have paid, you will then owe nothing? Do you imagine that the thousands, the millions of men who will lose in an instant, by that terrible explosion or by its reaction, all that constituted the consolation of their life, and perchance, their only means of sustenance, that they will leave you peaceably to fatten on your crime? Stoical contemplators of the incalculable

evils which that catastrophe will vomit upon France! Stupid egotists! who fancy the convulsions of despair and of misery will pass away as all others and so much the more rapidly, because they are violent! Are ye certain that so many men without food will leave you tranquil to devour those dishes of which you have desired to diminish neither the number nor the delicacy? No! you will perish; and in the universal conflagration you have not shuddered to enkindle, the loss of your honor will not preserve one of your detestable enjoyments! Vote, then, this extraordinary subsidy: may it be sufficient! Vote it, because, if you have any doubts upon the methods (doubts vague and not enlightened), you have none upon the necessity. Vote it, because the public circumstances will suffer no delay, and we are responsible for all delay. Refrain from demanding time—misfortune cannot grant it.

"Gentlemen, I remember, concerning a ridiculous motion of the Palais Royal concerning a laughable insurrection which had no importance save in feeble imagination, or in the perverse designs of some men of evil intentions, you heard these furious words, 'Catiline is at the gates of Rome; and they deliberate.' And truly, there was then around us neither Catiline, nor perils, nor factions, nor Rome. But to-day, bankruptcy, hideous bankruptcy, is there: it threatens to consume yourselves, your properties and your honor, and yet you deliberate!"

So eloquent, so fiery an appeal silenced all opposition—Necker's measure was passed.

At this time, Mirabeau, whose popularity was greater with the people than it was with the deputies, was constantly in Paris attending meetings in the districts and courting the friendship and influence of the mob's leaders. He absented himself so frequently from Versailles and the sessions of the Assembly that his conduct aroused suspicion among his colleagues, who could not altogether divine his purpose.

When Regnault de St. Jean d'Angély made a motion to prohibit the members of the Assembly from attending the district meetings, Mirabeau felt that the motion was aimed directly at him, and as he mounted the tribune to oppose it, he whispered into the ear of d'Angély, "I will wring tears of blood from you." He kept his word.

Mirabeau was visiting the district meetings for the purpose of strengthening his popularity, hoping thereby to secure that aid which would enable him ultimately to carry out his projects, if he were ever successful in forming an alliance with the court.

Mirabeau saw that he could be most useful to the monarchy if he could secure a position that would bring him into close or official connection with the king. He had the greatest confidence in his ability, if he had the power of the throne back of him, to stay the Revolution and to establish permanently a constitutional monarchy. If he had had the support of the king and the loyalty of the people, he could have controlled the Assembly. It was necessary, in order to save the crown, to have the moral and political influence and support of the monarch.

He could not accomplish his project by organizing a strong party among the deputies. Mirabeau was, in no sense of the word, a party man. He had supreme confidence in himself, depended upon his own resources, and made no permanent alliances with the different factional leaders of the Assembly. He was at no time identified with any clique. He was a free lance, and was ever bold and independent in the expression of his views. He was too proud to serve in second place and perhaps too autocratic and dictatorial to secure as chief of a faction the support of men of spirit. He was too outspoken in his criticism of men and methods to be a mere party leader. He was not a man who would trim his views to suit the declarations of a party convention, nor would he have his political principles circumscribed by platform resolutions. He held an absolutely unique position in the Assembly. Louis Blanc, after describing the three principal party groups in the Assembly, closes his description by saying: "The fourth party consisted of one man, Mirabeau."

As early as May, 1789, he wrote: "It is to undertake a proud and difficult task to minister to the public welfare without sparing any party, without worshipping the idol of the day, without other arms than reason and truth, respecting them everywhere, respecting nothing but them, having no other friends than them, no other enemies than their adversaries, not recognizing another monarch than one's conscience, no other judge than time. Well, I shall perhaps succumb in this enterprise, but I will persist in it."

In a letter to Mauvillon, he writes: "In truth, in a certain sense, everything is good to me; the events, the men, the things, the opinions all have their uses. I am too old to waste my strength in warfare. I wish to aid him who aids me; let us excommunicate nobody and associate ourselves with everybody. Mal est ce qui nuit, bien est ce qui sert. We ought to guard ourselves against being enemies of other classes; it is posterity that will distinguish the ranks."

He saw the growing influence of Robespierre and courted his society; he cajoled and flattered Camille Desmoulins, the idol of the Palais Royal, but he did not identify himself with their party. He had his own views and he used these men to reach his own ends.

He declared boldly to his friend, La Marck, that if it had not been for his father's death, which caused his absence from Paris on the 15th of July, he would have secured the mayoralty instead of Bailly. Perhaps it was this office he was seeking and plotting for, at the time his absence was complained of in the Assembly. This, no doubt, was the ambition that called him so often to Paris to harangue the multitude. His whole purpose was to be in a position where he could secure the confidence of the king, or where it would be necessary to be consulted by the court.

His alliance with the Duke of Orleans was with the intention of having the duke made sub-lieutenant of the kingdom, so that in case the king died, fled, or was deposed, he would be close to the man in the line of succession. When he discovered

what a craven the duke was, he dismissed him, without further delay, from all consideration.

Mirabeau, from the very beginning, felt that if he could only become a minister, he would save the monarchy, and his foresight enabled him to see clearly that if there was not a strong guiding hand, the throne, in a short time, would be overturned and the state surrendered to party and faction. He saw the weakness of the king and the shortcomings and incapacity of Necker, and he longed for a chance to advise one and supplant the other. To his friend, La Marck, he said: "The vessel of state is being driven before the tempest and there is no one at the helm." He longed to lay his hand upon the helm and pilot the vessel through the stormy seas. His desire was to reach the ministry, not only for the gratification of his personal ambition, but for the safety of France.

"Give him money," cried the queen, "money till he is gorged, but Mirabeau in the ministry,—never!" It took a long while and imminent dangers to induce her to believe that Mirabeau could materially aid in re-establishing the tottering throne, and when they did come to an understanding it was perhaps too late for any human power to change the course of the Revolution.

Mirabeau was what might be termed a "liberal royalist." He opposed an absolute monarchy, but believed in a strong executive, an hereditary aristocracy, and a ministry responsible to the people, with seats in the States General. He strongly favored a suspensive veto vested in the king. He believed in the monarchy, but he knew the time had

come when concessions had to be made to the people's demands. Reform in government was an absolute necessity. The administration of public affairs had been corrrupt and tyrannical; church and state had oppressed and tyrannized the people, had enjoyed all the privileges and had imposed the most cruel exactions. The whole system was unjust, rotten, and corrupt to the core, and had been built up by centuries of absolutism, injustice and extravagance, until the miseries of the people could be endured no longer. It was a structure that was top-heavy and resting upon a foundation of weak and insecure material. We may compare the system of abuses and tyranny built up by the *ancien régime* to a reversed pyramid spinning on its point; so long as the original impetus keeps the pyramid in motion its balance is preserved, but a blow or a shock makes it wobble and destroys its equilibrium.

Mirabeau saw the true conditions and knew that the time had come when the old order could not be saved, but he was anxious to save the throne and to make secure the needed reforms. "Let them know in the palace," said Mirabeau to La Marck, "that I am more their friend than their enemy." La Marck was specially impressed with the anxiety of Mirabeau as to the future. "What are these people thinking about?" said Mirabeau to his friend. "Can they not see the gulf yawning before their feet? Yes, all is lost, the king and the queen will perish and the mob will spurn their corpses. Even you do not realize how dangerous their position is, and yet they ought to be made to understand it."

CHAPTER XX

BANQUET OF THE GUARDS—FIFTH AND SIXTH OF OCTOBER—ROYAL FAMILY GO TO PARIS—THEY OCCUPY THE TUILERIES—THE ASSEMBLY FOLLOWS THE KING TO PARIS—THE DUKE OF ORLEANS

THE court, after the emotional legislation of the 4th of August, 1789, began to unite their forces for one more desperate effort to resist the Revolution and to save the monarchy. The plan was to carry the king to Metz, where was stationed the loyal army of Bouillé, there raise the royal standard and call to the king's side all the valiant spirits of France devoted to the interests of the kingdom and the old noblesse. This meant civil war. The secrets of the court reached the ears of the people.

The news only increased the revolutionary spirit. The Palais Royal echoed day after day with the rantings of demagogues. The district meetings were crowded, and the orators grew bolder and bolder. Pamphlets were distributed broadcast sowing the seeds of sedition.

An incident occurred, at this time, which momentarily gave hope to the royalists, but in the end gave fresh impulse and impetus to the Revolution.

The troops of the king were mobilized at Versailles. The Body Guard tendered a banquet to the officers of the Flanders regiment. The supper was

served in the royal theatre. It was a scene of splendor. The boxes were filled with beautiful women who were not chary in dispensing their smiles and applause. Heated with wine, inspired by the strains of ravishing music, the enthusiasm of the diners grew in fervor every minute. At the second course the grenadiers and dragoons were admitted to witness the spectacle. "The charge of the Hullans" aroused the fire in the hearts of the soldiers. Suddenly the king was announced. He entered the hall, the queen leaning on his arm, and carrying the dauphin. The crowd went mad with delight. Shouts and cheers greeted the royal family. Their health was drunk, swords were drawn, and oaths of allegiance given. The nation was insulted, the king exalted.

As Louis withdrew, the band played "O Richard! O mon roi! l'univers t'abandonne." Yes, Louis, all the world abandons thee! Such a sentiment appealed to every heart. Tears started to the eyes of fair women and vows to the lips of brave men. Who could help being loyal? Who, under these conditions, could be wise? The guests threw off all restraint and the palace that had been so dark and gloomy since the nobles fled, resounded once more with mirth and gladness. Old memories were revived of happy days long since departed and the future was radiant with hope. Court ladies pinned on the breasts of loyal soldiers the white ribbon of the Bourbons, while the tri-color of the Revolution was trampled under foot. It was far into the morning hours before the revelry ceased, before the lights of the palace were extinguished.

While the feast was on "all went merry as a marriage bell," but in the distance could be heard the dreadful tocsin ringing. Paris had its ear to the ground. It was listening to the merry-making; it was starving while Versailles was feasting. Rumors, exaggerated and distorted, flew thick and fast on their way to the Palais Royal. The demagogues and the popular orators shrieked in wild and furious accents: "An orgy in the court while in the capital the people cry for bread! The cockade is crushed under the feet of royalists and foreign soldiers; the nation is in danger, your peace is assailed and your liberty menaced." "J'ai été enchantée de la journée de Jeudi," said the queen, and her words flew like wildfire through the capital. It was an unlucky Thursday for her, but she could not read the handwriting on the wall nor see far enough into the future to measure the consequences of that untimely feast. The royalists never could see far enough ahead to keep them out of danger.

Pétion, in a fiery speech, denounced the banquet that had aroused all the envy and hatred of the starving populace. A royalist called on him to explain his denunciation. Mirabeau exclaimed: "Let it be expressly declared that whosoever is not king is a subject and responsible, and I will furnish proof as to the guilty parties." This was intended for the queen, for as he left the tribune he remarked in a stage whisper: "I will denounce the queen and the Duke of Guiche" (one of the captains of the guard). This was intended to deter the Right from further pushing the inquiry. Let it be

decreed that she is a subject and her conduct then will be investigated and criticised. An investigation might have touched the danger-line, and so her friends pressed the matter no further.

Oh! it was cruel that while money was so scarce and food so dear, the court should have flaunted its extravagance in the face of a starving people. Paris was maddened with the thought.

On the morning of October 5, 1789, a young woman, beating a drum, gathers a crowd of women and without a definite purpose they march, and at every step their ranks increase. They reach the Town Hall and take possession of it. In the belfry they find a priest, the Abbé Lefevre, whom they straightway hang to a rafter. He, fortunately, after the women disappear, is cut down by a kindly hand before life is extinct. They dance and sing and laugh, but without any reason for their merriment. Some one starts the cry for bread, then they become more serious and show some temper. A popular orator addresses them and says Paris has no bread, but at Versailles there is enough and to spare; that there may be some crumbs and wine left over from the feast and the revelry of the guards. "To Versailles," is now the cry, and the crowd that has grown to the size of a grand army, begins its march. On it flows like a mighty torrent, this multitude of amazons led by a strumpet; but there are good and honest women in that crowd, hundreds of them, who, in the mad excitement of the hour, jostle with frail sisters and elbow the scuff and scum of Paris; but they turn not back from their errand; they are hungry and need bread, and who

can give it them if not the king, the father of his people?

The rain begins to fall, but it does not dampen their ardor. Cheered by songs and encouraged by their leaders, they soon reach Versailles. Hungry, ragged, tired, covered with mud, they present a woeful spectacle; a sorrier sight has never been witnessed in this courtly city of Versailles, where only a few months before the States General marched through its streets amidst a dazzling splendor.

Couriers had preceded the mob and the palace was thrown into excitement; messengers were sent out to Meudon, where the king was hunting, and to Trianon, where the queen was feasting. Preparations were made for the king and the queen to flee, but Louis, with that indecision that always marked his conduct, at last decided to remain. Surely there can be no danger in facing a rabble of women; a few words of flattery and some bread to appease their hunger will end the affair,—but Louis knew not how to deliver the words, and made no preparations to distribute the bread.

The news that this motley army was on its way to Versailles reached the Assembly while Mirabeau was denouncing the banquet of the guards, and the insult that had been offered to the national cockade. Immediately after he ceased speaking he went behind the president's chair and whispered in the ear of Mounier: "Paris is marching on us! Make an excuse, vacate the chair and go over to the palace and give them warning; say that I told you, if you like. Time presses, there is not a moment to lose."

"So much the better," said Mounier; "they have only to kill us all; the affairs of the republic would only gain." "Sir, the phrase is neat and well spoken," said Mirabeau, and at once he left the hall. He went to the lodgings of his friend, La Marck, where he dined. Mounier, however, acting on the advice of Mirabeau, went over to the palace, but at that time the king had not returned from his hunting. When Louis reached Versailles the president of the Assembly, with a deputation of five women, waited upon him and told him of the distress in Paris and begged him to supply the city with grain and food. He promised, put his promise in writing, and a committee of women were sent to Paris in the king's carriages to inform Bailly, the Mayor, that the misery of the people would be relieved.

The crowd, however, remained in Versailles. The rain continued to pour in torrents. A cold October wind was blowing and the night closed in, dark and cheerless. A crowd of women took shelter in the Assembly and listened to the debates, often interrupting the speakers and frequently calling for Mirabeau. "We want to hear our dear little mother Mirabeau," was the cry from the galleries.

Outside the hall, bivouac fires were burning, and around these gathered shivering men and women; many of them slept during the night on the cold, wet ground without cover or shelter from the storm.

About midnight the drums of the army of La-Fayette were heard; the National Guard was on its way to Versailles. Its presence was necessary,

for already a scuffle had taken place between the mob and the household troops. It was two o'clock in the morning before tranquillity was restored. The mob, the troops, the court, were fatigued and exhausted after a day of such excitement, and the city was hushed. The Assembly, however, remained in session until four o'clock, when, as Dumont says, "Mirabeau returned, rebuked the noisy women and moved an adjournment."

Early in the morning some men of the mob, prowling around the palace, find a gate of the chateau open. They enter, and are fired on by a soldier of the household guard. The anger of the mob is aroused and they press on, having a hand-to-hand conflict with the troops; thousands rush to the rescue, doors are battered down, the palace is entered, the sentinels flee, and the cry resounds: "Save the queen!" "Save the queen!" She hears the alarm, and in terror, half dressed, she rushes into the apartments of the king. The crowd press on and clamor for the heart and the blood of the "Austrienne." "We want her head on a pike," shriek the men. "We want to carry her entrails in our aprons," cry the angry, maddened women. Brave soldiers stand in defence and offer their lives in sacrifice and fight with all the courage of desperation, their courage inspired and intensified by the fact that they are defending not only a beautiful queen, but an unfortunate, a defenceless woman. Individual bravery, however, cannot withstand the ferocious onslaught of a wild and frenzied mob. The crowd surge on, door after door is broken down, until, at last, they reach the apartments of

the queen; she has escaped, her bed is still warm and marked with the impression of her body; ruffians slash the bedclothes in disappointed rage, furious at the loss of their quarry.

It would have been fortunate for Marie Antoinette had she been murdered at this time; it would have saved her much woe, bitter humiliation and the dreadful suffering through which she had yet to pass. It might, too, perhaps, have been fortunate for France and might have secured a constitution without further bloodshed and terror. It would have removed the queen from every consideration, would have created a sympathy for the royal family, and would have induced a determined effort upon the part of all conservative citizens to restore order and to secure the needed reforms by moderate means.

While the crowd, thwarted in their purpose, are considering what next to do, the French Guards arrive, turn their bayonets on the mob and drive them out of the palace.

La Fayette, who, unfortunately, overslept himself, hastens to the king to assure him of his loyalty and to promise him protection.

The rabble outside call for Louis, and he is persuaded by La Fayette to appear upon a balcony. At the sight of the king a shout goes up from the multitude, for, strange to say, he still has their loyalty. They demand the queen, and leading the dauphin by the hand, she comes out to face that angry mob. "Put away the child," they cry. Instantly she obeys the cruel request, and she stands alone in all the courage and dignity of her womanhood. A

contemporary in describing her appearance says: "She was dressed in white, her head was bare and adorned with beautiful fair locks. Motionless and in a modest and noble attitude she appeared like a victim on the block." If there ever was a moment in the life of Marie Antoinette when she played the role of queen, it was on that balcony when she faced a mob of angry men and infuriated women, who, a few minutes before, had hunted her with murder in their hearts. Her beauty was resplendent, her courage was sublime. It was a sight that aroused a sentiment even in the hearts of her bitter enemies. The growls and murmurs subsided. At first the cheers were faint, but gradually they swelled into a chorus of "Long live the queen." It was too late to win the affection of the crowd, but she commanded for a time, at least, their admiration and respect. La Fayette, with all the gallantry of his nature, knelt at her side and kissed her hand. The crowd that would have murdered her a minute before turned to applaud her. This was her hour to die. Would that some fiend or friend had sent a bullet through her heart!

The king must go to Paris. The mob demanded it, and La Fayette also favored this course. It was a sad and sorry moment for Louis and his queen when they turned their backs on Versailles. The people had conquered their king and they carried him back to Paris as their captive. He might as well have been in chains. It was the triumph of the people. Once before he had been escorted by the mob to his capital, but the scene that was now presented was grotesque, melancholy, terrible.

Louis, of course, took it all complacently, for he was not capable of feeling any deep emotion, nor apprehending the full meaning of any event. But what must have been the sensations of the queen? What must have been the thoughts that controlled her imperious mind? There were moments, no doubt, when she desired less to be saved than to be avenged. How she longed for the coming of that day when she could take vengeance on those who were responsible for her humiliation; how she marked her enemies for destruction; but alas! for her, there was to be no change in her fortunes; this was only the beginning of her sorrows.

She understood, with its full significance, what the return of the king to the capital meant, under such circumstances. She felt keenly the disgrace, and her proud spirit rebelled within her, though she dared not reveal in her face the thoughts that stirred her soul. She was dependent for her safety upon those whom she feared and hated, and it is a difficult part to play when a haughty woman has to smile and accept favors from those whom she, in her heart, despises.

La Fayette did all in his power to protect her from insult, but his kindly offices only chafed her proud spirit and placed her under seeming obligation. To him, in a great measure, she attributed her disgrace and humiliation, and while she smiled upon him, she hated him.

The procession from the van to the rear was a wild and crazy mob. The National Guard in front marched without military order or discipline, carrying loaves of bread upon the points of their bayon-

ets; behind them came a crowd of men and women from the slums of Paris, dancing and singing like bacchanals, flaunting in the face of the queen their insults and derision. It is said that the heads of the two murdered men of the Body Guard, the men who had sacrificed their lives in defence of the queen, were borne aloft on pikes; but this has been denied; the proofs of the denial, however, are not altogether conclusive. It is to be hoped that some men had influence enough in that crowd to have prevented such a spectacle. It is almost impossible to believe that La Fayette would have permitted such an insult to the king. In referring to this matter, Gouverneur Morris wrote a letter on October 6, in which he said "two heads of the Body Guards are brought to town, and the royal family are to come this afternoon." There are many contradictory statements on this subject, and it is hard to reach the truth through such a mass of conflicting testimony.

In the procession marched the Body Guard, disarmed and bareheaded, captives of war. Could a greater ignominy have been placed upon the king and the queen than that their defenders should have been thus disgraced, only because they had fought bravely in their efforts to protect and save the royal family?

The king's carriage was surrounded by the deputation of one hundred members, appointed by the Assembly, to escort his Majesty to Paris. Soldiers, under the immediate command of La Fayette, guarded the royal family and the deputies, and behind them came another crowd of men and women

marching in disorder and confusion, assailing the ears of the queen with their ribald and indecent songs.

"I still see, I still hear," wrote a contemporary witness, "those bedraggled women, rendered yet more hideous by two days of barbarous fatigue. I see the Regiment of Flanders, those chasseurs of the Trois Eveches, ashamed of their too ready defection and seeming now to envy the men of the Body Guard those perils which they had the cowardice not to share. I see again the General La-Fayette, pale from weariness, yet more pale from the results of his fatal sleep."

Another contemporary witness writes: "Madmen dancing in the mire and covered with mud, surrounded the king's coach. The groups that marched foremost carried on long pikes the bloody heads of the life-guardsmen butchered in the morning. . . . A troop of women, ugly as crime itself, swarming like insects and wearing grenadiers' hairy caps, went continually to and fro, howling barbarous songs, embracing and insulting the life-guards."

This distressing, melancholy procession wended its way slowly to Paris, carrying the king a prisoner to his capital.

It was Saint Priest who told Louis, "Sire, if you allow yourself to be taken to Paris, your crown is lost."

From this moment the power of the monarchy passes into the hands of the mob. "The riff-raff of Paris is become the despot of all France." In his own capital, the king is held as hostage.

At first the struggle had been between the nobility and the Third Estate; then between the king and the Assembly; and at last, between the king and the people, and in every contest Louis and his friends had suffered ignoble defeat. Even the Assembly was now dominated by the clubs and the mob. The rabble was in supreme control.

The king established his court in the Tuileries. The Assembly voted him, at his request, 25,000,000 francs ($5,000,000) for his household expenses, and to the queen an allowance of 4,000,000 francs ($800,000). In view of the prevailing conditions and the poverty of the treasury, these amounts were most generous.

The king settled down and seemed as well contented at Paris as at Versailles. He ate heartily, slept soundly and, with renewed energy, devoted himself to the construction of locks; rumor states they were most clumsily made. He was about as good a mechanic as he was a king.

After Louis came to Paris, the Assembly made arrangements to follow him. There was some difficulty in finding a suitable meeting-place or convention-hall, but at last a riding-school in the neighborhood of the Tuileries was selected, and the Assembly lost no time in taking possession. It was a coincidence that the change was from a tennis-court to a riding-school. Both places had been devoted to the amusements of the nobles. The selections seemed to be the irony of fate.

The events of the 5th and 6th of October were said to have been inspired by Mirabeau and the Duke of Orleans. It was contended that the upris-

ing of the people was not spontaneous, but that the leaders of the mob, many of them disguised as women, were supplied with money by Mirabeau, and instructed as to the plan of action.

Mounier firmly believed that Mirabeau was responsible for the disorders of October 5 and 6, and for that reason refused to name him a member of the deputation appointed to accompany the king from Versailles to Paris. Mirabeau felt much chagrined over this slight, for his appointment as a member of this delegation would have given him a great opportunity to impress the king and the queen with his importance. Mounier and La Fayette were determined to give no such chance to Mirabeau. Let it be said to the credit of Mirabeau, however, that there was no proof discovered of his connection with such a plot as intimated by Mounier. After a most careful investigation of the charge at the Châtelet, he was acquitted and even his bitterest enemies were convinced of his innocence. The result of the inquiry caused a most favorable reaction in his favor.

The insurrection of the 14th of July began in the garden of the Palais Royal under the windows of the palace of the Duke of Orleans. His retainers and partisans had encouraged the disorder and had incited the mob to riot. Mirabeau, Talleyrand and others had urged the duke to take advantage of the opportunity offered, and to insist upon the king naming him lord-lieutenant of the kingdom, but when the duke saw the king his courage failed him, and instead of insisting upon the appointment, he intimated that he would willingly go to

England if his presence in France annoyed his royal cousin.

He displayed so craven a spirit at this time that Mirabeau turned away from him with contempt, declaring that he would not have him for his footman, and further adding "he is an eunuch for crime; he would, but cannot."

While the mob was on its way to Versailles on October 5th, urged on by his own agents dressed in the garb of women, he again proved himself the poltroon. Despicable, cowardly in heart, he was frightened to such a degree that his red and bloated face turned white. He sought the king's council and stood waiting at the door of the chamber, like a penitent, to assure them that he was in no way responsible for the disorder, and that he was his cousin's loyal subject. The wretched liar! he knew that his paid agents had been at work inciting the people to violence.

He would willingly have abandoned all his accomplices and betrayed their secrets to save himself from the displeasure of the king and the vengeance of the law. LaFayette threatened him with arrest, and he quietly hurried away to England, where he remained for eight months. Upon his return he was received with transport by the Jacobins.

The Duke of Orleans, surnamed Egalité, was a corrupt, sensuous creature, celebrated for his depravity. He was below the middle stature; "his features were regular and pleasing, till libertinism and debauchery covered them with red, inflamed pustules." He was not actuated by any lofty desire

to ameliorate the conditions of the people, but he courted their favor simply to show his contempt for the nobility, which, bad as it was, would not recognize him nor tolerate his society.

In 1778 he was charged with cowardice, in that he concealed himself in the hold of a vessel during a naval engagement off Ushant. He was to have succeeded to the position of High Admiral, but the king, in order to humiliate him, appointed him Colonel-General of the Hussars. This slight was the cause of the intense hatred he had for Louis.

To gain popularity, he bribed and feasted the journalists of Paris. He spread public tables and lighted fires for the poor of the city; he even distributed money among them. In consequence, he became the idol of the mob.

Through the resignation of M. Thevenard, in 1791, he was appointed High Admiral of France. To thank the king for the honor conferred, he attended a royal levée, but the nobles jostled and grossly insulted him, even going so far, it is said, as to spit in his face.

When the king's trial took place he voted for his death in so cool and heartless a manner that even the Jacobins frowned upon him and the Assembly murmured its disapproval. He attended, in an open carriage, the execution of the king, and after the body was removed, drove to the Palais Royal, and from there in a coach drawn by six horses went to Raincy to revel with his foul companions.

When his son fled to the camp of Dumouriez, he declared that if his son were guilty of treason, the image of Brutus before his eyes would teach him

his duty as a father and a patriot. Shortly after this he was marked for execution by Robespierre, and sent to the guillotine. On his way to the scaffold, when the people hissed and cursed him, he shrugged his shoulders and cried out: "Those creatures used to applaud me."

CHAPTER XXI

MURDER OF FRANÇOIS THE BAKER—MIRABEAU INTRIGUES FOR A PORTFOLIO—MOTION OF PETION—MIRABEAU'S SPEECH AGAINST THE AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY BLIN—MIRABEAU'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE COURT—MIRABEAU PENSIONED—HIS INTERVIEW WITH THE QUEEN

The events of the 5th and 6th of October had sobered the conservatives and had brought them to a realizing sense of the universal peril. The mob quieted down temporarily, after the king took up his residence in the capital, but it had felt its power and was ready for an outbreak at any moment. It had tasted blood and its appetite was only half satisfied.

Bailly and La Fayette put forth strenuous efforts to restore order. They soon had an opportunity to exercise their power and to enforce the law. The mob seized a baker named François, who was suspected of concealing bread for favored customers and evading the municipal regulations. He was rescued by the authorities, but on the way to the Town Hall the prisoner was taken from the officers by the mob, and his body, in the twinkling of an eye, was dangling at a lamp-post; his head was carried on a pike, followed by an exultant, a drunken and disorderly rabble. The elevation of heads upon pikes was one of the characteristic features of the French Revolution. It was a horrible

practice, a hideous spectacle, and early revealed the ugly brutality of the mob. "Surely," says Lavalette, "Satan himself first invented the placing of a human head at the end of a lance! The disfigured and pale features, the gory locks, the half-open mouth, the closed eyes, images of death, added to the gestures and salutations which the executioners made them perform in horrible mockery of life, presented the most frightful spectacle that rage could have imagined."

La Fayette, at the head of a detachment of the National Guard, dispersed the mob and captured the pole-bearer. The murderer was indicted, tried, convicted, sentenced, and put to death the following day.

The Assembly also took a hand and passed an act providing for the suppression of riots and the conviction of the rioters. On the 21st of October a martial law was proclaimed which authorized the municipal authorities to employ force in dispersing mobs after the citizens were ordered to retire. Every thoughtful man in France must have known at this time that the only escape from civil war was the strengthening of the executive and the discouragement of mob rule. A reaction set in, and the conservative forces of the nation united their efforts to preserve the forms of the monarchy and to restrain the violence of the rabble. But the movement lacked energy and enthusiasm, and it was too late to be effective.

Mirabeau's ambition was to secure a portfolio, and he was laboring earnestly to effect the forma-

tion of a ministry in which the Assembly would have a representation, and of course in his plan he was to hold an important place, but his enemies, on all sides, were at work and watching his every move.

In the Assembly on October 27, 1789, Petion proposed that ministers should be declared ineligible as representatives, intending thereby to thwart the plans of Mirabeau, for it was generally understood that Mirabeau was bidding and scheming for a place in the royal cabinet. Mirabeau succeeded in having the debate on this question continued by forcing an adjournment. On November 6, 1789, he proposed that the ministers should henceforth be invited to attend the meetings of the Assembly. This proposition would strike a reasonable man as wise and desirable, but it met with a most determined opposition, no doubt because the enemies of Mirabeau thought they discovered the purpose of his motion. Lanjuinais, in a fervid speech, exclaimed that the Assembly was "dominated and carried away by a man of genius! What would he not be able to effect were he a minister!" and then proposed that "the representatives of the nation should be declared incapable of receiving place, pension or favor of any kind from the executive power during the session of the legislature to which they had been elected, and for three years following." An amendment was offered by a deputy named Blin "that henceforth no member of the Assembly might accept office."

The radicals, fearing the intrigues of Mirabeau, and desirous of blocking the ambition of the great

tribune, united their forces with Necker, but before the vote was taken Mirabeau ascended the tribune, knowing full well that he could not, even with all the power of his eloquence, snatch victory from defeat. He did not, however, ask favor, beg for quarter nor meekly bend his head to the storm. But ever defiant and dramatic in manner, even in the face of certain defeat, which meant the crushing of his hope and ambition, he delivered a speech that for sarcasm and irony can hardly find its parallel in the oratory of deliberative assemblies. "It could not be," he said, "that the member who brought forward the motion, thought that a good minister could not be found among the chosen men of the nation, nor could he mean that because a citizen had been able to win the confidence of the people, he therefore must be unworthy of the confidence of the monarch. After the Assembly had solemnly declared all citizens equally eligible to all employments and offices, were they to except from this equality the twelve hundred deputies who had been honored by the suffrages of a great people? Or was the mover convinced that the ministry and the Assembly ought to be divided and opposed to each other, that every measure likely to establish a closer connection, greater harmony and unity between them, ought to be avoided; or was it thought that the king in the selection of his ministers ought to prefer his courtiers or those perhaps who had vainly sought the suffrages of the electors to the chosen representatives of his people? If the minister in whom the nation had placed all its hopes, who had been recalled to power by an almost unan-

imous outburst of popular feeling, had sat among them, was it maintained that this should have incapacitated him from accepting office? I cannot believe it, for I cannot bring myself to believe that which is palpably absurd. Clearly, then, the intention of the mover must be something different. It might perhaps be expedient to prevent some individual member from becoming minister; but great principles ought not to be sacrificed to obtain a particular end. I, therefore, propose, as an amendment, that the members of the Assembly, whom the mover must have in view, shall be excluded from the ministry. These can be only two. The other representatives have given too many proofs of independence, courage and public spirit for it to be possible to suppose that they can be the object of his apprehension. But there are two representatives about whom he and I may speak our minds more freely, and certainly it would seem that his motion must be aimed at one or the other of these two. You must already, gentlemen, have guessed who they are, the mover himself and I. I mention him because it is possible that his diffident modesty or irresolute courage fears that some great mark of confidence may be thrust upon him, and that he trusts to secure a pretext for refusing it by this general disability. And next I say myself, because certain rumors which have been spread about me may have excited the hopes of some and the fears of others, and it is possible that the mover may have believed these reports and that his estimate of me may be the same as my own; in which case I am not surprised that he should think me

little fitted to discharge the duties of an office which is indeed far above, not my zeal nor my courage, but my talents and my attainments; especially if I am to be deprived of the instruction and the counsels which I have received in this Assembly. This, then, gentlemen, is the amendment I beg leave to move, that the proposed incapacity to hold office should apply only to Monsieur de Mirabeau, member for the Commons of Aix."

This remarkable speech, or rather its outlines, we have taken from the pages of Willert, in his "Life of Mirabeau," and although not in full, it is choice English and gives a clear conception of the delicate irony and cutting sarcasm of the original. To enjoy the speech to its full measure, however, one must read it in the mother tongue of the orator.

The amendment of M. Blin to the motion of Lanjuinais was carried amid applause. The friends of the court rejoiced, little thinking that they had put an obstacle in the way of the salvation of the monarchy, and the commons exulted because they thought they had cut short the ambition of Mirabeau. Necker and La Fayette, no doubt, were specially pleased for the reason that a rival, whom they would not trust, could no longer vex them with his intrigues and projects. How little things may turn the whole course of a nation's history!

Mirabeau, defeated but not dismayed, still hoped he could be the means of saving the monarchy. It was not alone his ambition that controlled him in his efforts to reach the ministry, for Mirabeau

loved France, loved her with all the devotion of his soul. He believed, too, that a monarchy was essential to her existence and welfare. He had favored the Revolution because he knew that reforms in the government were a necessity, but the reforms having been accomplished, his purpose was now to secure them under a constitution that would restrict the absolute and arbitrary power of the monarch, fix responsibility upon the ministers, and at the same time guarantee to the people liberty under the law and give them a voice in the imposition of taxes and the creation of loans. "I should regret," he said to the queen, "to have been instrumental only in effecting a vast destruction."

La Marck was still his friend, and used all his influence in trying to persuade the king and the queen to put their trust in Mirabeau.

Rumors that the court was negotiating with Mirabeau were put in circulation in the early days of the Revolution. According to the Duchess d'Abrantes, the negotiations began shortly after the assembling of the States General. The following is related in her memoirs: "On the 7th of May, 1789, the queen was informed of Mirabeau's hostile intentions. M. Necker was consulted about the expediency of entering into a negotiation with him, and his opinion was, that Mirabeau was possessed of extraordinary talent, but wanted judgment, and M. Necker considered him not very formidable. He therefore declined to have anything to do with the matter, and merely yielded to the queen's wish to place at her disposal a sum of money to assist the execution of her designs. Fur-

nished with his instructions and a well-stocked purse, the Count de Reb went one morning to Mirabeau, plied him with much art, and finally made him offers which he felt confident he would not hesitate to accept. But fate ordained that the man who had always been needy and tormented by creditors should be at that moment well supplied with money. What was the result? He rejected the Count de Reb's offer, and asked him for whom he took him. He thus dismisses the count with all the dignity of an ancient Greek, telling him that offers of money could not be listened to by him. The count, though chagrined, did not lose hope. He knew Mirabeau well enough, and was sure he would not remain long in his present frame of mind. Shortly afterwards a certain M. Jouvelet called on the Count de Reb, and announced to him that Mirabeau consented to place all his influence at the disposal of the court, but required an honorable treaty and not a paltry bargain; that he did not wish to supersede M. Necker, but that any other part of the ministry would suit him. On these terms he would devote himself to the court. The count, on hearing this, went to Mirabeau, was well received, and heard all the reasons he gave for his readiness to *sacrifice* himself by entering the ministry at such a moment. The same day the count saw the individual who was to speak to the queen, and he, on the first intelligence of the capitulation of Mirabeau, for he was really a tower of strength, ran immediately to acquaint her Majesty with the news. The Count de Reb followed, and when he entered the royal cabinet the queen advanced

towards him, her countenance beaming with pleasure. 'The king will be gratified by your zeal, Monsieur,' said she to the plenipotentiary: 'well, had you a good bargain of this man? How much has he cost?' He replied that Mirabeau, with true magnanimity, had rejected all propositions of a pecuniary nature. He then mentioned the appointment to the ministry. At this the queen reddened and then turned deadly pale. She closed her eyes, and striking her forehead with her hand, exclaimed, 'A minister! Make Riquetti Mirabeau a minister! Never, never will I allow the threshold of the king's council to be sullied by the footsteps of such a man!' She trembled with rage. 'Let him have money, grant him all he asks for, but to make him a minister! Is it possible that my friends can give me this advice?' She then paced the room with every mark of agitation, repeating the words, 'A minister, forsooth! a minister!' The negotiation was consequently broken off for a season, for Mirabeau would not accept money, and the queen would not, till long afterwards, consent to grant him an interview."

When La Marck first suggested to the queen that Mirabeau might render efficient aid to the court, she replied, "We shall never, I hope, be reduced to such extremities as to be obliged to have recourse to Mirabeau." Although the queen was bitterly opposed to Mirabeau there were some persons near the throne who appreciated his worth and knew what his support would mean if his loyalty could be secured. They looked upon him as a Samson who could either pull down the pillars of the tem-

ple or sustain them. The dealings of Mirabeau with the court are, of course, not clearly understood. The facts are involved in much doubt and uncertainty. From the very nature of things this must be so, for the negotiations were carried on secretly and with every precaution against discovery. It is stated that under the first agreement he made with the court he received a pension which was paid to him by Monsieur. He received another pension from Louis d'Aremberg, who was devoted to the queen. His friend La Marck also kept him well supplied with funds.

The pension paid by Monsieur was soon withdrawn. Mirabeau would not act upon the advice of men who knew so little of the real temper of the people. "If the court," he said, "desire to profit by my aid, they must depend upon my advice." If their suggestions had been followed, his popularity would have been destroyed in a fortnight. It was this popularity "which was the very instrument of his success and which alone could render his services available."

La Marck says that the day after Louis was settled in the Tuileries, Mirabeau urged him to tell the king and the queen that they would be ruined if they remained in Paris. "I am busy," said Mirabeau, "devising a plan to enable them to escape; could you convey to them the assurance that they can depend upon me?" With his usual foresight, he saw the terrors that were approaching, for he told La Marck that "given up to itself, Paris will, in three months, probably be a hospital and certainly a theatre of horrors." La

Marck told him to prepare his plan and that when it was completed, he would find some means of placing it in the hands of the king; because of his rebuff in September, when he urged the queen to accept the services of Mirabeau, he did not think it prudent at this time to suggest the matter directly to her. He told Mirabeau that he thought he could reach her in another way.

The plan submitted by Mirabeau to La Marck was that the king must leave Paris, but he must not repair to Metz, nor any other town on the frontiers with the hope of re-establishing his authority by the aid of any foreign alliance. He should not ally himself with the nobles and stand in opposition to the people, nor should he oppose the Assembly and appeal to the country, for this would provoke a civil war. He declared that the Revolution was a necessity and that many of the laws passed by the Assembly must be accepted, and that the people must be assured that the king would favor the reforms already established and practise economy in the administration of the government. After the plan was submitted to Monsieur, La Marck spent hours in trying to prove to him that Mirabeau was not responsible for the events of the 5th and 6th of October. La Marck came away "with a sad heart, convinced that decision and firmness were not to be found in a quarter where they were indispensable."

Count Mercy-d'Argenteau, who was the representative of the Austrian Court at Paris, was convinced that Mirabeau was the only man in France who could save the monarchy, and he strongly ad-

vised taking him into the pay of the court, and, in time, placing him in the ministry. He, no doubt, imparted his views to the queen and aided materially in inducing her ultimately to give Mirabeau an audience.

Mirabeau had but little, if any, respect for the king, but he had great admiration for the queen. "You do not know her," he said to Dumont; "she has prodigious strength of mind; she is the only man his Majesty has about him." He felt that if he could break down the barrier that separated them, he could gain her support and confidence, and his brain fairly seethed with plans for the salvation of France and the monarchy. But he had to overcome a woman's personal dislike and prejudice; a proud woman, a queen who had been denounced, and, in her opinion, maligned by him in public. It requires great confidence and audacity in any man to attempt to win a woman whom he has insulted, and Mirabeau knew that to gain the queen's faith in his plans he must first induce her to believe that he was necessary to secure the safety of her throne. The Count Mercy-d'Argenteau and the Count de la Marck were the instruments he used in this connection.

There was every reason why the queen should have feared to trust Mirabeau, for, from the very beginning, he had taken a most prominent part in opposing the court and defying the power of the crown. She believed that he was responsible, in a great measure, for the violence of the mob and the disorders that prevailed throughout the kingdom. Who, among all the revolutionists, had so

insolently defied the king? Who had so relentlessly persecuted her friend Besenval, and who had so cruelly held her up to public execration because of her malign influence over the king? She regarded him as a traitor to his order, for he was patrician by birth and yet the most pronounced reformer in his principles and utterances. From her position, she looked upon him as a mere demagogue and the most dangerous agitator among all her enemies; but if she had been able to control her prejudices, to smother her personal antipathy, she would have found him to be the only man in the kingdom who had the power to stay the Revolution and to establish the throne on a substantial basis. To be sure, it would have been shorn of its absolutism and restricted by constitutional limitations, but as these reforms were inevitable, it would have been better to accept them than to lose both crown and life. If Mirabeau, as minister, could not have controlled events, then there was no man in France who could have saved the monarchy.

According to the best information to be obtained on the subject, it was in May, 1790, that Mirabeau entered into a definite treaty with the court. He was to receive a pension of six thousand francs per month, his debts were to be discharged, and promissory notes were to be given to him for one million francs. In consideration, he promised the King "loyalty, zeal, activity, energy, and a courage surpassing all that is probably expected of him." He promised "everything except success, which one man cannot command when so

terrible a fever undermines the state and endangers the monarch."

It was a delicate undertaking he had in hand, and it required patience and wisdom to reach the desired results. The court wanted the matter to be speedily brought to a consummation and grew impatient at delay. Their impatience, no doubt, was due to the fact that they lacked confidence in his loyalty and integrity. And, admittedly, there were many reasons for this want of faith. Mirabeau had been most unscrupulous in many of his transactions in the past, especially in the matter of the publication of his Berlin letters, in which he showed an utter want of honor. Montmorin had been one of the parties to that negotiation and had been victimized by the treachery.

On the 3d of July, 1790, Mirabeau had his first and only interview with the queen. Michelet says it was the end of May. It took place at St. Cloud, "in a very solitary spot at the highest point in the private park, in a kiosk that crowned that fairy garden." Mirabeau was wrought up to a high state of excitement in expectation of the meeting, for its importance and its consequences appealed to his imagination. "He found some happiness in feeling himself the supporter, the defender, perhaps the deliverer, of a handsome and captive queen." On the other hand, however, he feared the court might not play fair, and he took his nephew with him in his carriage, to stand on guard, with instructions that if he remained, beyond a certain time, in the garden, the nephew was to hasten to Paris and give the alarm. What a tempest would

have been stirred up if the nephew, growing impatient and fearing mischief, had, by mistake, sped to Paris and given the alarm! How could Mirabeau have explained to the people the reasons for the interview? No excuse could have saved his popularity.

Mirabeau feared assassination or kidnapping; he did not put implicit confidence in the queen's friends and he was too wise not to guard against surprise. He may have feared that the court would play a game that would ruin him in the estimation of the people. His fears, however, were merely imaginary. The queen was willing to meet him, although she had no idea of giving him her trust or confidence. The interview was short. She flattered him with a pleasing phrase and he vowed his loyalty. She expected to meet a monster and she was not disappointed, for she afterwards said that "the interview inspired her with horror and made her sick." She played her part, however, with consummate skill, for Mirabeau was greatly exalted and believed that he had made a deep impression. Her fair words deceived him and his vanity blinded him.

The interview was vague and inconclusive. It was impossible for two such persons at the first meeting to do more than play for points. How could they understand each other? She was anxious to use him without giving him her confidence, and he was willing to serve her if he could thereby secure advancement. They were not only strangers, but had been bitter enemies. There was nothing to inspire confidence and create a recipro-

cal loyalty. Their language was only well-turned phrases and gracious compliments. "With a foe of ordinary capacity," said the queen, "with an every-day enemy, I should now be guilty of a very foolish, a very injudicious step; but with a Mirabeau——!" "Madame," he said, "when your august mother admitted one of her subjects to the honor of her presence, she never dismissed him without allowing him to kiss her hand." The queen extended hers. Mirabeau, having touched it with his lips, exclaimed, "Madame, the monarchy is saved." "He withdrew affected, delighted, and deceived."

Mirabeau was entirely sincere in his desire to help sustain the tottering throne, but the queen, while professing friendship, was quietly assuring her friends that although the court had consented to use Mirabeau, there was nothing serious in their connection with him. The queen's repulsion to Mirabeau could not be overcome, and when she took a dislike to any person she could not help but show her aversion.

If the king and the queen had trusted to able counsellors, or if they themselves had been more politic, they could have called to their aid men who were not only able but who were willing to serve and save them.

La Fayette, Bailly, and Mirabeau were all vain men, impressed with their own importance, and they could have been won by tact and good judgment to the cause of the crown. La Fayette, as the General of the National Guard; Bailly, as the Chief Magistrate of Paris, and Mirabeau, as the leader of

the Assembly,—if they had been united in effort,—could, without question, have saved the monarchy. They were all royalists at heart, that is, they favored a constitutional monarchy, and they were earnestly opposed to the growing spirit and increasing violence of the Revolution. But the personal dislike of Louis for these men, and their distrust of each other, made it impossible to form a combination and needless even to attempt to use them jointly in an effort to save the crown; and yet these were the men, above all others, who could have saved it. The king had no wise adviser, no keen, shrewd political manager at his side; he trusted only the men of his own circle, whose suggestions were as weak or as unwise as his own.

If the court later on in the Revolution had united La Fayette, Mirabeau, and Bouillé, this, too, would have been an effective combination, for through them they would have had the National Guard, the Assembly, and the army. The union of these forces, if properly directed, could have mastered the situation. The court ought to have seen that the days of an absolute monarchy in France were numbered, and to save the throne it was necessary to concede, approve, and accept the reforms and unite all the conservative forces in favor of a constitutional monarchy, to establish it firmly on the new basis, and to restore public order at the earliest possible moment. Every hour of delay only made it more difficult to recover lost ground.

CHAPTER XXII

MIRABEAU MAKES OVERTURES TO NECKER AND LA FAYETTE—MIRABEAU AND THE COURT—MIRABEAU'S MANNER OF LIVING—WAS MIRABEAU VENAL?—THE KING AND THE REVOLUTION

Mirabeau, who in every effort he made evinced a sincerity to restore order and strengthen the monarchy, began making overtures to Necker and to La Fayette, hoping through them to aid the court, but he signally failed in these endeavors.

Necker's vanity and conceit led him to believe that he alone could save France, and yet he failed to discover the real causes of the Revolution, and consequently had no idea what remedies should be applied. He never got beyond the question of disordered finances. He and La Fayette failed to see how Mirabeau could be of use to the throne; they did not appreciate how great his talents were; they feared him, and they measured him by his immorality and not by his real worth as a statesman and a patriot.

La Fayette loathed Mirabeau, and vauntingly exclaimed: "I have vanquished the king of England in his power, the king of France in his authority; I will certainly not yield the place to Mirabeau." And yet these two men, by skilful manipulation, notwithstanding their dislike for each other, could have been brought into confidence with the king, and no doubt could have succeeded

in firmly establishing the monarchy; but they were working at cross purposes. The clay was at hand, but there was no potter to mould it.

Mirabeau, in his efforts to aid the king, endeavored in every way to interest La Fayette, but in all the attempts he made he could never secure his confidence. At last, in utter despair, he wrote to him: "We live in a time of great events but little men. I am less able than ever to discover any one with whom I should care closely to associate myself. . . . I have always told you that the giddiness of your elevation and your fatal indecision in what concerns yourself blind you to the impossibility of perpetuating a state of things only to be justified by success. . . . Your liking for mediocrities and your weakness when your inclinations are concerned will cause a career which might have been brilliant to end in failure and endanger the commonwealth by your ruin."

"Mirabeau knew," says McCarthy, "that the chief obstacle to all his schemes lay in La Fayette, with whom he had tried, again and again, to come to an understanding, but always without success. He declared that La Fayette, all powerful for doing harm, must become more and more powerless to prevent harm." He tried flattery on the General, but it failed to win. "Your great qualities," said Mirabeau, "need to be animated by my energy, and my energy requires the support of your great qualities." La Fayette's dislike and fear of Mirabeau made him proof against all his appeals, cajolery, flattery, and schemes. Mirabeau's analysis of La-Fayette's qualities was that "he is not so great as

singular; his character more fussy than actually strong: a generous man, but romantic and chimeric, living in illusions."

"Mirabeau, by airing his contempt," says Von Holst, "of the general's political capacities, and by indulging in regard to him, too, in his dangerous taste for inventing nettling sobriquets, made it impossible for La Fayette to accept in thorough good faith the proffered alliance." "Upon La Fayette, however, rests by far the greater half of the responsibility that this alliance was not concluded, which might have changed the fate of France."

Mirabeau always felt that if the state had a pilot, the storm could be weathered; and he firmly believed if he were at the helm he could guide the vessel. "The monarchy," he said, "is imperilled. If no pilot is found, it is likely enough that the vessel may drive on to the rocks; but if, in spite of prejudice and jealousy, a man of capacity were called to the helm, you can have little idea how easy it would be to steer into deep water."

It seemed strange and unaccountable to Mirabeau that these men to whom he appealed would not partake of his enthusiasm, adopt his plans, and join with him in an effort to save that which they themselves were anxious to save. To him the project was so plain and so easy of accomplishment that he marvelled at their density. He had the vision and the intellect of the statesman and saw clearly what should be done; he had the ability of the politician and knew how to accomplish his ends.

The court also bitterly opposed Mirabeau and

did all in its power to prevent an alliance with the king; so he had to fight his battle alone, and found his worst enemies among those whose cause he was really serving.

Mirabeau advised the king and the queen from time to time, but it was useless, under all the conditions, even to hope that anything could be accomplished from such a union. There was at all times a distrust where there should have been an implicit confidence. In a business so delicate, if success were desired, there should have been unity of faith, of action, and of purpose.

Mirabeau had also tried to reach the court through the Count of Provence, but his efforts in this direction were a blank failure. The count was almost as weak in character as his brother, the king. "He has," wrote Mirabeau, "the timidity as well as the innocence of a child." It was a game that required stout players, and the court furnished only mannikins. "What blind groping, what pusillanimous acquiescence on the part of the court, what a grotesque mixture of old ideas and new projects, of petty repugnances and childish longings, of willing and nilling, of abortive likes and dislikes! . . . But the lowest depth of all is Monsieur."

The court paid Mirabeau to secure him, without ever intending to depend upon him or take his advice. They acted at times as if they would rather be lost than saved by him. In fact, at a later period in the Revolution, when La Fayette could have quelled the rioters, terrorized the Jacobins, and strengthened the throne, Marie Antoi-

nette indignantly refused the General's aid and declared with emphasis that she would rather perish than be rescued by him. She, no doubt, was controlled by this same spirit in the case of Mirabeau. She could not, even in the presence of imminent danger, overcome her prejudices.

The king drifted along on the current of events, had no real appreciation of the dangers that beset him, and trusted blindly to the future to bring relief; hoping that time would evolve, without any effort upon his part, a condition or reaction that would once more firmly establish his throne. He believed that the Revolution was but a passing frenzy, that it would necessarily wear itself out, and that the country would return to its normal condition, and he simply sat with his arms folded waiting for the change. He was always dreading a civil war, and yet he was in the midst of a revolution that was worse and more dangerous to him than any civil war could possibly have been. Giving advice to such a man was sheer waste of time, and Mirabeau, whose knowledge of men was profound, abandoned all hope in that direction. When he turned to the queen, however, he firmly believed that with her assistance and influence the monarchy could be saved, but we have seen with what mistrust and repugnance she received him.

Mirabeau had a delicate task to perform; he was under pay to serve the court, and in order to be useful to it he had to maintain his popularity. He was serving royalty and revolution at the same time. "More honesty and less cleverness, Mirabeau, or beware of the lantern," wrote Freron in

his *Friend of the People*. It was a most difficult and at the same time a most dangerous role to play for a man so impulsive, independent, and positive as Mirabeau. He was serving two masters, and he had to preserve most carefully his equilibrium. He was anxious to save both royalty and liberty.

Madame de Staël, who personally disliked Mirabeau, but who had a great admiration for his talents, wrote: "One could not help having pity with the constraint imposed upon his natural superiority. Constantly he was compelled in the same speech to act as partisan of popularity and reason. He tried to wrest from the Assembly with demagogical phrases a monarchial decree, and he often let the Royalists feel his bitterness, even when he wanted to carry one of their points; in one word, it was evident that he had constantly to combat between his judgment and the necessity of success." "He is compelled," said Count Fersen, "to hide himself under the forms of democracy in order not to lose all his influence."

It was generally believed that Mirabeau was the pensioner of the king, and he really took no pains to divert the suspicions; in fact, so great a change in his manner of living had taken place that it aroused comment in every quarter, and his enemies lost no opportunity to injure him by circulating reports of his sumptuous living. He kept open house in the Chaussée d'Autin, and was in touch with the most distinguished men of the nation, not forgetting to caress at the same time the leaders of the mob.

"Are you sold to the court?" asks Desmoulins. "Come dine with me," says Mirabeau, "and we shall talk about it." It is not hard to imagine how easily the great tribune removed all suspicion from the mind of his young friend. Desmoulins admits that he is corrupted by Mirabeau's table, which is too profuse and too dainty. "His Bordeaux wine and maraschino have merits which I vainly try to disguise from myself, and I find it very difficult to resume my republican austerity and to detest aristocrats whose crime is to set store by these excellent dinners."

Mirabeau's entertainments were on a most lavish scale, and he was most ostentatious in the display of his newly acquired wealth. "A tribune of the people becoming a Lucullus could not fail to render him an object of distrust." He squandered money in the purchase of costly plate, gems, books, rare engravings, and the choicest brands of wine. His library sold, after his death, for 140,000 livres $28,000).

At the beginning of the Revolution he was a poor man, but now he indulged in every luxury. His blue carriage, driven rapidly through the streets, was one of the noticeable features of the capital and attracted as much attention as the white horse of La Fayette.

He insisted upon further royal contributions, as he was desirous of purchasing La Marais, a sumptuous country-seat located a short distance from Paris. La Marck protested against a prodigality so foolish, and at the same time urged Mirabeau not to advertise in this way his venality. "It

would be wiser," he said, "for you to buy Versailles a year hence than a cottage now." But Mirabeau's desires were greater than his fears and he insisted upon a further allowance. La Marck pleaded earnestly with him to moderate his style of living so as not to attract attention, but Mirabeau only smiled at his friend's fears and admonitions.

The queen's almoner, M. de Fontanges, Archbishop of Narbonne and a member of the Assembly, was the medium of communication between the court and Mirabeau. The Bishop was careful to take every precaution to prevent discovery, and Mirabeau's imprudence caused him much annoyance. The court, too, lost confidence in a man who displayed an indiscretion so foolish and dangerous.

It was as early as May, 1790, that rumors of his venality were published, and while on his way to the Assembly, hawkers were inducing the sale of a pamphlet in the streets by shouting: "The disclosure of the great treason of the Count of Mirabeau!" But his presence of mind never left him; he thundered as usual from the tribune, and in no word he ever uttered did he give his enemies an opportunity to doubt or impugn his loyalty to the Revolution. Nor did he at any time change his views; he was consistent in advocating with all his might, and under all circumstances, the principles for which he had contended from the very beginning. He was anxious to save the monarchy, but only under condition that the reforms of the Revolution should be secured.

"A few days ago," he said in his speech favoring the right of the king to declare war, "the people

sought to carry me in triumph, now they charge me with treason. It needed not this lesson to teach me how short the distance is from the Capitol to the Tarpeian Rock. But he who fights for reason and for his country is not so easily intimidated. Such blows aimed at me from below cannot stop me. To such assailants, I reply: 'First answer me, if you can, then calumniate me as much as you please.'"

It was, no doubt, owing to the fact that he had not deserted nor betrayed his principles that he was willing to become the pensioner of the court; from his point of view, he was not guilty of treason nor venality, for he was only aiding that cause which, at the beginning, he had so ardently espoused. He was employed by the court to do that which he himself desired to see accomplished.

"It may be admitted," says Dumont, "that he was not over-scrupulous in money matters, but he was too proud to be dishonest, and he would have thrown out of the window any one who dared to make him a humiliating proposal."

"He cared no more for money," says Von Holst, "than the dirt under his feet. He never even felt so much as tempted to stoop to means, by which he would have lowered himself in his own eyes." If it were money he wanted, and was willing to take it at any cost to himself, "it needed but a word," says McCarthy, "to win the unscrupulous stock-jobbers who had held aloof while Necker was making despairing appeals to the nation. They would have bought up the orator at well-nigh

any price that it might please his vanity to set upon his periods, his phrases, and his passion."

La Marck said that when Mirabeau was in financial distress, "he would only have needed to let the gold come to him, which the factions scattered about in profusion," but not a sou of it ever soiled his fingers. "Mirabeau would not be bought."

"I am sold, but not paid," said Rivarol.

"I am paid, but not sold," responded Mirabeau.

La Fayette, who surely was no friend of Mirabeau, was fair and just enough to declare that "he was not inaccessible to money, but for no sum would he have sustained an opinion destructive to liberty or dishonorable to his mind." It was known to his bitterest enemies, to all France, that he favored the monarchy, but with constitutional restrictions. From this position he never retreated for a moment, nor was he ever paid nor bribed to abandon those principles which he had so consistently advocated and defended.

He received a pension from Monsieur, and subsequently one from the king, "but he considered himself an agent entrusted with their affairs and he accepted these pensions, not to be governed by, but to govern those who granted them."

The fact that Mirabeau, for a long time, was the secret adviser of the court goes without saying. The documentary evidence on this point is conclusive. That he received money from the king is also admitted, but that he was bribed to betray his cause or desert his principles was denied by those contemporaries who knew him well, and an intima-

tion of such a thing would have been vehemently resented by Mirabeau himself.

He was so bitterly assailed on charges of venality, that he wrote in a vein of felicitous irony: "Since I have been in the habit of selling myself I ought to have acquired sufficient gold to have purchased a kingdom, but I know not how it happens that I have always been poor, having at my command so many kings and all their treasures."

In passing an opinion upon this matter we must be guided in our judgment by the standard of his period and the conditions under which he was paid.

In his day it was not considered beneath the dignity of any one to accept a gift or pension from the king. The proudest in the land, for the lightest service, did not hesitate to accept such a bounty. "Mirabeau took money of the king," says McCarthy, "because he was a loyal and avowed supporter of the monarchy. No serious student of the career of Mirabeau, putting himself with any vitality into the place of the man, and the time of the man, need feel in any degree called upon to avow shame for him." Mirabeau did not surrender his principles, he did not betray his cause. He thought the Revolution had gone far enough and he feared its violence. He did not submit to be governed by those who paid the money,—in truth, they were to be directed, advised and controlled by him. He was anxious and at all times had been willing to save the monarchy. He had favored the abolition of its abuses, but never its destruction. "It was no new thought of Mira-

beau's to turn to the king." He was convinced, using his own language, that "the restoration of the legitimate authority of the king was the first need of France, and the only means to save her."

"He declared his principles," says Thiers, "in a kind of profession of faith; he engaged not to swerve from them and to support the court so long as it should follow the same line. But was this selling himself? A weak man would, no doubt, have sold himself by sacrificing his principles; but the mighty Mirabeau, so far from sacrificing his, brought power over to the court and received from it that aid which his urgent necessities and his licentious passions rendered indispensable to him. Mirabeau, inflexible in his principles, combated by turns his own party and the court, as if he had not expected popularity from the former or the means of existence from the latter."

"Mercy-d'Argenteau, the Austrian Ambassador, and La Marck," writes Von Holst, in considering this question of Mirabeau's venality, "were men not only of spotless, but of most scrupulous honor, and while they were perfectly familiar with the laxity of Mirabeau's moral principles in money and other questions, the thought never entered their heads that the fact of his taking money from Louis XVI. could, in the opinion of any one, throw the slightest reflection upon him. Nor were they altogether wrong, even if he be weighed on the more sensitive scales of our times, for he was paid for work done and services rendered."

He received money to aid a cause which he had espoused, long before the payment of money

or the giving of a pension had been suggested. He was employed to help save that kingdom which he had never desired to destroy.

" To abandon them (the king and the kingdom) to their fate," writes Von Holst, " would certainly not have been patriotic, and I suppose that the moralists who, with the zest of holy monks burning a heretic, have nailed his memory to the pillory for taking this money, will admit that patriotism ought also to be an article in a statesman's code of morals."

" If Mirabeau consented to be the secret adviser of the court, for the sake of earning the money, his vindication can, of course, not be based upon the plea of patriotism. It can, however, be proved beyond the possibility of contradiction that the salary he received was but an incident and not his end."

One of the questions that gave him an opportunity to prove his loyalty to the crown was that concerning the right of declaring war.

He argued in favor of the resolution, placing the power in the hands of the executive. Barnave, Lameth, and Robespierre insisted upon leaving it to the Assembly. The final decree conferred the right upon the Assembly, but only on the initiative of the king and subject to his sanction. It was this compromise that Mirabeau, after a stubborn fight, secured. It proved his fidelity to the crown, but it, on the other hand, laid him open to the censure of the radicals.

Mirabeau, during the summer of 1790, constantly, day after day, urged the king to adopt a

plan that would release him from his imprisonment in the Tuileries. He suggested that Louis should go to Fontainebleau, that he should demand from La Fayette assistance and protection, if necessary, to enable him to make the visit, and if the general should refuse, it would prove that he was the gaoler of the king.

Mirabeau, upon one occasion, said to the queen that "if La Fayette is ever head of the army, he will hold the king a prisoner in his tent." Mirabeau did not believe that La Fayette at this time would be willing to have the provinces know that Louis was virtually held in custody. But Louis would not act. He feared violence and persisted in a policy of inaction, or what was worse, a course of vacillation. Mirabeau wanted the country to see that the king was either independent or a prisoner. It seemed impossible, however, to get the king to agree to anything. He had no courage of decision. "He encouraged every anti-revolutionary enterprise, but avowed none."

The truth was, if we may judge from his conduct, that Louis never did intend to accept the results of the Revolution any more than did the queen. To them it was a monster that had stripped them of their power, and despoiled both church and state. It kept them in captivity and subjected them to insult and derision. It had sat uncovered in the presence of the king. It had insolently defied him when he ordered the Assembly to disperse. It had made him play the craven when he submitted to the pinning of the tri-color on his hat. It had stormed the royal palace, chased the queen

from her bed-chamber, and compelled her to bow in humiliation before the rabble that a moment prior had sought her life. It had carried the king from Versailles to Paris, to grace the triumphal procession of the mob, and lodged him as a prisoner within the walls of the Tuileries. It held him as a hostage for the good behavior of the emigrants. It stationed sentinels at the door of his chamber lest he might escape. It had shot down his guards, captured his fortress, looted his palace, and dispersed his friends. It had humbled his pride in the face of all the courts of Europe and made him, because of his weakness, an object not of sympathy, but of ridicule and contempt. The pride of a haughty queen and the spirit of a weak king had been humbled, and they longed for the day when they could avenge the wrongs they had suffered.

Louis believed in his divine right to govern, and the rabble had usurped his power. "Kings," said Catharine II. of Russia, "ought to proceed in their career undisturbed by the cries of the people, as the moon pursues her course unimpeded by the howling of dogs."

The education of Louis, his early surroundings, and associations had taught him that he was absolute, and how could he reconcile himself to existing conditions which were in direct contradiction to the experience and teachings of his house? He was a Bourbon with a good memory, and he did not acquire knowledge readily. He could not forget the past and he could not adapt himself to the present. He never was sincere in any promise

he made, nor oath he took, to accept or support the principles of the Revolution. Even when he voluntarily accepted the constitution, he was plotting to escape. His only hope of safety was to flee from the kingdom, or else be rescued by a foreign army. He was anxious to save his crown, but he wanted to save it without putting himself under obligations to those who had threatened its loss. That was wholly natural, but under the circumstances not wise, for a combination with his enemies was the only method of salvation left to him.

As time ran on, the Revolution was making steady progress and there were no signs of any reaction setting in.

While Mirabeau was struggling hard to reconstruct the monarchy, busy hands were laying the foundation stones of the republic. Civil rights were secured, religious tolerance was decreed, distinctions were removed, titles were abolished, taxation was equalized, trial by jury was introduced, and inhuman penal statutes were repealed. It was hard to induce a French monarch to accept such reforms and reconcile himself to such conditions.

CHAPTER XXIII

MARQUIS DE FAVRAS—CONFISCATION OF CHURCH PROPERTY—ASSIGNATS

During the period, in which negotiations were pending between Mirabeau and the court, an incident happened that for a time put an end to all their plans and agreements.

The Marquis de Favras was a light-headed, light-hearted courtier, and a devoted royalist. On the 5th of October, 1789, at Versailles, he was the bold spirit that urged the nobles to mount the horses in the royal stables and charge the mob. He had conceived a counter-revolutionary project and, with more courage than prudence, boasted of his plans. Spies were sent to watch his movements and listen to his "vaporings." His extravagance having reduced him to indigence, he was just the sort of a man, in those stirring times, that was ready for a desperate enterprise, and one whom the people could readily suspect of being concerned in anti-revolutionary designs. He was arrested, charged with having plotted to raise a royalist army, to murder La Fayette, Necker, and Bailly, abduct the king, and place the Count of Provence on the throne. It seems almost incredible that a project so important and so far reaching in its consequences would have been left to the skill and management of so wild a rhapsodist.

It was currently reported that the conspirators were numerous; that their plans were well laid, and that the blow was ready to be struck. Paris was thrown into a whirl of excitement in expectation of startling disclosures and developments.

The case came on for trial in the Court of the Châtelet and De Favras was convicted of treason and sentenced to death on the 18th of February, 1790. He was given short shrift, for the people clamored for his speedy execution, lest delay might give an opportunity to the conspirators to consummate the plot. He was hanged in the Place de Grêve after nightfall, under the glare of torches. It was a grewsome sight. "Bon!" grimly remarked the Count de Rochechouart, "voilà un noble pendu! pendez-en cinq ou six par mois, mais laissez les autres tranquilles."

If Favras had any accomplices, he died without revealing their names. He protested his innocence to the last. The facts in the case will never be fully known. It was admitted that he had some secret correspondence with the Count of Provence, but that it was of a personal character, and had no political significance whatever. The count, it was intimated, was in need of two millions and had retained the services of Favras to negotiate the loan. It does seem hard to believe that a man like Favras, whose entire wealth consisted of a hundred roubles, and whom the count said he had never seen, should have been engaged in such employment.

Mirabeau was accused of having been a party to the plot, but treated the accusation with his usual

disdain. He was called as a witness in the trial and denied any acquaintance with Favras. He admitted that he had met him several times, but always in the presence of others. When Favras asked him if they had not discussed a proposed plan to aid the Revolution in Brabant, Mirabeau answered that he could not recall any such conversation. Favras urged the question and begged Mirabeau to sift his memory, but the latter emphatically stated that he had no recollection of such an interview. Favras did not in any way, however, attempt to implicate Mirabeau in the alleged conspiracy of assassination and abduction.

There is now in existence a letter written by Provence that gives the details of such a conspiracy, but whether Favras had anything to do with it cannot be proved. If he were concerned in such a plot, he was faithful to his friends and displayed a courage of the highest type. He went to his death like a gentleman, "with politest composure." A messenger hurried from the scaffold, after the execution, to the palace of the Count of Provence to inform him that it was all over and that no confessions had been made. "That is all right," said Provence, "let us now sit down to supper."

If there really was such a conspiracy afoot the facts were most successfully suppressed, but the episode cast a suspicion on many men and among them was Mirabeau, although, strange to say, he soon recovered his unbounded popularity. He treated the whole matter with so supreme an indifference that even his enemies were convinced

of his innocence,—" de l'audace! Encore de l'audace! et toujours, de l'audace!"

That Mirabeau was in the pay of Provence was confirmed by Dumont. Talleyrand, many years afterwards, while at a dinner party in London, told Lord Greville that he had seen a receipt given by Mirabeau to Provence for one million francs, but the bishop was so habitual a liar that no confidence can be placed in any uncorroborated statement he ever made.

Dumont says " the secret of this intrigue was never known, but I have no doubt Favras was one of those men who, when employed as instruments, are led by vanity much further than their principles intend, . . . and spurred on by the fatal ambition of embracing objects beyond their reach, are at last betrayed by their own activity. . . . As for Mirabeau, he bestowed a thousand curses upon the shuffling courtiers,—those mountebank conspirators who confided the restoration of the monarchy to the exertions of a ruined gamester; but the praises he bestowed upon the intrepidity of Favras made me shrewdly suspect that the death of the latter was not less consolatory to his friends than to his enemies."

Necker's plans, schemes, and dreams had come to naught. Neither loans nor patriotic contributions were sufficient to meet the expenses of the government and decrease the deficit. Taxes had been reduced and equalized,—the odious taxes, such as the *gabelle*, had been abolished. In consequence, the revenue had fallen off to such a degree that it was

insufficient to meet current expenses and to pay the interest on the loans; the public debt was increasing annually. Something had to be done to relieve the financial distress and stringency. The state was facing bankruptcy. Specie was scarce; much of it had been carried out of the kingdom by the emigrants and much of it was being hoarded by the timid and by those persons who dreaded the future of the Revolution. The money in circulation was not sufficient for the purposes of trade and commerce. Capital, too, had grown timid and had withdrawn from enterprise as it always will in times of confusion and uncertainty.

The clergy had accumulated immense wealth; they owned one-fifth of all the lands of the kingdom, and it was proposed that this property should be seized by the state and appropriated to the public use. The confiscation of the church property was one of the most important acts of the Assembly, and it resulted in arraying the clergy with all their power and influence against the further progress of the Revolution. Religious toleration had been proclaimed by the Assembly, and now that same body had confiscated the property of the church. The faithful were up in arms. The throne had been deprived of its privileges and the church despoiled of its wealth. There was nothing left to do but to unite the forces of both to save both.

Louis was set up as the Defender of the Faith and "nothing was easier to the priests," says Michelet, "than to make Louis XVI. appear in the light of a saint or a martyr. His sanctified,

paternal, and heavy-looking countenance was that of a cathedral saint, ready-made for a church porch."

Fromont, in his memoirs, says: "I repaired secretly to Turin (January, 1790) to the French princes to solicit their approbation and support. In a council, which was held on my arrival, I demonstrated to them that if they would arm the partisans of the altar and the throne, and make the interests of religion go hand in hand with those of royalty, it would be easy to save both. Though strongly attached to the faith of my forefathers, it was not upon the non-Catholics that I proposed to make war, but upon the declared foes of Catholicism and royalty; upon those who loudly asserted that Jesus Christ and the Bourbons had been talked of too long; upon those who wished to strangle the last of kings with the intestines of the last of priests.

"The real arguments of the Revolution being force, I felt that the answer must be force. Then, as at present, I was convinced of this great truth,—that religious zeal alone can stifle the republican mania."

After the confiscation of the church property, a crusade was begun at once, and ardent appeals were made to the faithful from the pulpit and in the confessional, to rally to the standard of the cross and the crown, and to stay the hands of the impious from despoiling and destroying the church and the throne. So bitter was the hostility that the worst passions of the human heart were aroused and, in time, religious wars were waged

in Avignon, La Vendée, and Brittany, until the streets of the towns ran blood. The butcheries of the "White Terror" rivalled those of the dreadful days yet to come when the "Red Terror" was to outrage every sentiment of humanity.

The original motion to confiscate the property of the church was made in the Assembly by Talleyrand, the Archbishop of Autun, who, for his "impious act," was subsequently excommunicated by the pope. Talleyrand was ably seconded and supported by Mirabeau. They proposed the confiscation and sale of the church property for the payment of the public debt, and out of the proceeds of the sale, the clergy were to be paid a fixed amount for their salaries, the support of the church, and the relief of the poor. The curés were to be allowed not less than twelve hundred livres, not including therein a dwelling and a garden. This was a cunning device to win the support of the humble clergy. The measure was carried by a majority of one hundred and twenty-two on a total vote of nine hundred and fourteen.

The Assembly, after the act of confiscation, had a difficult task to decide what disposition should be made of the property to relieve the public exigencies. To offer it all for sale at once would greatly depreciate its value; to put so great a quantity of land on the market at one time would be to sacrifice it. Bailly suggested that it should be sold to the municipalities, and that they should be given time to dispose of it gradually. The municipalities, not having ready funds to pay for the property, were to give bills payable at a certain

date. The credit given these notes would insure their circulation as money. This was the first idea of the assignat.

Crown and church property was put upon the market to the value of nearly four hundred and fifty million francs (ninety million dollars), and paper money was issued to the same amount. This paper money was called assignats, and the notes at first ranged in amount from one thousand to two thousand livres. The confiscated lands were to be held and sold for the redemption of said paper money and it was the original intention that the amount of issue should never be beyond the actual market value of the land. In fact, Mirabeau favored a decree that there should never be more than twelve hundred million livres (two hundred and forty million dollars) of assignats in circulation at one time. The notes were to bear interest and the holders could purchase with them the lands that had been confiscated by the state; when so converted, the notes were to be destroyed. They were also made a legal tender for all purposes. It was thought that the church property would yield seventy million livres (fourteen million dollars) annually and this at thirty-three years' purchase would produce a total sum of two billion three hundred and ten millions of livres (four hundred and sixty-two million dollars).

The church property was not all land,—much of it was state paper, debts, mortgages, and assets of like character.

The lands did not sell readily; people delayed buying them, hoping they would fall in value.

The first instalment gave possession and the speculative owners straightway cut the timber and harvested the crops, and when the second payment fell due, made default.

Mirabeau at first opposed the issuance of paper money, which, in his characteristic way, he designated "a walking pestilence." He was subsequently, however, won over to the scheme by the argument and reasons of his friend Claviere, in whose judgment and financial ability he had great confidence. At the time of the debate on the second issuance of assignats, he made a most eloquent argument, claiming that the exigencies of the state demanded immediate relief, and that this was the only practicable plan; and if the plan had followed his suggestions, it would not have ended so disastrously.

The Abbé Maury, in his reply to Mirabeau, dramatically held up two notes of the John Law issue, "stained with the tears and the blood of an earlier generation," and eloquently pictured the dreadful distress in the reign of Louis XV. that followed the period of paper money and frenzied speculation. He eloquently urged the Assembly to consider carefully the step they were about to take. But his appeal was of no avail; he was interrupted by the jeers and the laughter of the deputies and the gallery. Vainly he argued that the assignats were but paper promises; that they were based on the value of land which had to be sold before the notes could be redeemed; that the value of these notes, in consequence, was uncertain and that the doubt as to their real value would cause

them to depreciate; that the issuance of this paper money, in large quantities, would dangerously expand the volume of currency, lead to extravagance, speculation, over-production, and ultimately to repudiation and bankruptcy; that the lessons of history should warn the Assembly against the adoption of a financial system that, in time, would impoverish France.

The principle of the assignats was all right, provided the government had a value in the lands or the property confiscated that was sufficient to redeem the notes, but, of course, if the government issued more notes than it could redeem, or made promises that it could not keep, public confidence would be lost, and the whole scheme would fall to pieces.

The exigencies of the government had to be relieved, its credit had to be saved, and this was the only plan that was in any way practicable. It warded off impending bankruptcy and, indeed, might have afforded permanent relief, if its original design had been adhered to and carried out. But the issues from time to time were so vast that at last the amount reached the enormous sum of forty-five billion francs (nine billion dollars). The notes were easily counterfeited, and the government took no stringent measures to prosecute the counterfeiters. Gradually every limitation was withdrawn from the issuance of new series and, whenever the government needs were urgent, the printing press was put to work as if there never was to be a day of reckoning. The assignat, which was to be redeemed by the funds resulting from

the public sale of the state lands, was subsequently supplanted by the mandat, which empowered the holder to take immediate possession of the land in payment of his note, if he so desired. In other words, the mandat was a direct lien on the real estate of the Republic. But over-issues soon again flooded the market with a fluctuating paper currency. The notes in time became almost worthless, and in 1796 they were withdrawn from circulation.

CHAPTER XXIV

COURT PARTY ENDEAVORS TO SECURE NEW ELECTIONS IN THE DISTRICTS—FESTIVAL OF THE FEDERATION—MASSACRE AT NANCY

In order to stay the Revolution, the clergy and the nobility endeavored to secure new elections in the districts, contending that the period allotted to the deputies of the States General had expired, their power having been limited to one year according to the desire of the districts. On the other hand, it was argued that the sessions of the Assembly could not come to an end at this time, in view of the fact that the deputies had taken an oath in the Tennis Court on the 20th of June, 1789, not to separate until they had given a constitution to the nation. "The court was expecting and watching for the moment of dissolution,—the interregnum,—the ever-perilous moment between the Assembly that exists no longer and the one not yet formed. Who was to reign in the interval but the king? And having once resumed his power and seized the sword, it would be his business to keep it."

Chapelier argued for the commons in an eloquent speech, in which he declared that "all sovereignty rests with the people, but this principle has no application to the present case; it would be destroying constitution and liberty to renew the Assembly before the constitution is completed. This is in-

deed the hope of those who wish to see liberty and the constitution perish, and to witness the return of the distinction of orders, of prodigality in the public expenditures, and of the abuses that spring from despotism. The constitution can only be made by one Assembly. Besides, the former electors no longer exist; the bailiwicks are used in the departments, the orders are no longer separate. The clause respecting the limitation of power is consequently without value; it will, therefore, be contrary to the constitution if the deputies do not retain their seats in this Assembly; their oath commands them to continue there, and public interest requires it." This argument was a clear example of begging the question and was based on expediency rather than on principle, and the real facts and the law of the case.

"You entangle us in sophisms," replied the Abbé Maury. "How long have we been a National Convention? You talk of the oath we took on the 20th of June without considering that it cannot weaken that which we made to our constituents. Besides, gentlemen, the constitution is completed. You have only now to declare that the king enjoys the plentitude of the executive power. We are here for the sole purpose of securing to the French nation the right of influencing its legislation, of establishing the principle that taxation shall be consented to by the people, and of securing our liberty. Yes, the constitution is made, and I will oppose every decree calculated to limit the rights of the people over their representatives. The founders of liberty ought to respect the liberty of

the nation; the nation is above us all and we destroy our authority by limiting the national authority." To this clear, logical, and unanswerable argument, Mirabeau ascended the tribune to make reply. The facts were against him, but the commons were with him.

"It is asked," he said in his most dramatic manner, "how long the deputies of the people have been a National Convention? I answer, from the day when, finding the door of their session-house surrounded by soldiers, their place of meeting bristling and defiled with bayonets, they went and assembled where they could, and swore to perish rather than betray or abandon the rights of the nation. Whatever our powers were that day, their nature was changed, and whatever powers we may have exercised, our efforts and labors have rendered them legitimate, and the adhesion of the nation has sanctioned them. Let them now go and hunt out of the useless nomenclature of civilians the definition of the words National Convention! You all remember the saying of the great man of antiquity, who had neglected legal forms to save his country. Summoned by a captious tribune to confess that he had violated the laws, he replied: 'I swear I have saved my country!' Gentlemen," he exclaimed, turning to the commons, "I swear that you have saved France." This was mere declamation. It was neither logical nor pertinent. If the deputies were elected for a year, how could the fact that they had taken an oath not to separate until they had accomplished a certain result extend their term of office? Their conduct was a clear

usurpation of authority. How could the powers of the delegates be changed by an act of their own not authorized by their constituents, an act not sanctioned by the people?—for the latter had been given no opportunity to be heard upon the question. How could the labors and the efforts of the deputies, no matter how beneficial to the country, render the exercise of unauthorized powers legitimate?

The concluding sentences in the speech of Mirabeau admit the usurpation and the reason of it. The Roman general excused himself for violating the laws because he had saved the republic. The deputies were to continue in office in violation of law, because, in their opinion, they had saved France. "Let not the citizens allow themselves to be persuaded that the laws can be defended by being broken," exclaimed Mirabeau, upon a memorable occasion.

Politicians were the same then as they are today,—loath to surrender their power; but in this instance there was a potent reason for the deputies of the commons to retain it at all hazards, for its surrender would, perhaps, have resulted in the loss of much, if not all, that had been gained. If the court party had won their point and elections had been decreed, the Revolution might have been a different story. The commons believed that the exigencies of the situation required the continuance of the Assembly until France was redeemed, and they consequently ignored the law. They acted upon the assumption that the end justified the means.

Almost a year had passed since the fall of the Bastile. The fourteenth of July was approaching. It was an anniversary that called for national rejoicing. It was a red-letter day in the calendar of the Revolution, and marked a glorious epoch in the record of man's struggles for liberty and political regeneration. It was to be signalized as the dawn of an era of brotherly love.

The Field of Mars was selected as the place for the holding of a National Festival. It seemed a mockery that a plain, dedicated to the god of war, was to be the meeting-place of the representatives of all the nations, where, in fraternal greeting, they were to welcome in an era of universal peace.

As a preliminary to this patriotic féte, it was proposed in the Assembly the abolition of titles, armorial bearings, liveries, and orders of knighthood. Scenes such as were witnessed during the delirium of the session of August 4, 1789, were repeated on June 20, 1790, when noblemen, in a spirit of emotional patriotism, joined with the popular members of the Assembly in destroying "the pompous paraphernalia of other times" and stripping themselves of the proud titles of ancestry and the distinction of honored names. Maury, the son of a shoemaker, opposed the motion,—a motion which had been seconded by a Montmorency, a representative of one of the oldest and proudest houses of France. Under the decree, the Marquis de la Fayette became simply M. Mottier; the Duc de Montmorency, M. Laval; and the Comte de Mirabeau, M. Riquetti. This was breaking down with a vengeance the barriers of caste

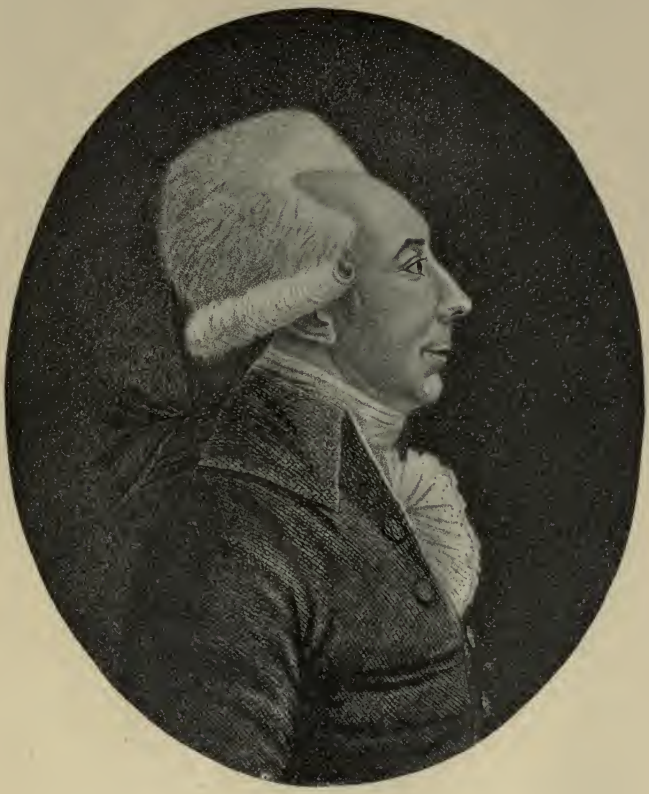
and ushering in an era of social, as well as political, equality.

In the wild enthusiasm of the hour, a motion was made by one of the Lameths that the equestrian statue of Louis XIV. on the Place des Victoires, representing him trampling on conquered provinces, should be removed. "In the days of liberty," the orator exclaimed, "these monuments of slavery ought not to be endured. It is not fit that the people of Franche-Comté, when they come to Paris to attend the National Festival, should see their image thus enchained." The motion was carried.

Jean Baptiste Clootz, known as "Anacharsis Clootz," who, in his sublime vanity, styled himself orator of the human race, and who declared that his heart was French and his soul sans-culotte, came forward with a proposition that the representatives of all the nations should be presented to the Assembly and be assigned a location in the Great Federation.

He was a Prussian baron, a half-witted creature, who had travelled much, had written some, and whose mind had been upset by the excitement of the Revolution. He claimed to have enjoyed the friendship of Edmund Burke, and boasted that he was the personal enemy of Jesus Christ. He gathered a delegation of men representing many nations; most of them, no doubt, had been picked up in Paris in out-of-the-way places. Some of his delegates, perhaps, had never seen the lands they represented, but they answered the purpose, and their real nationality was sufficiently disguised under the costumes they wore. At a time when

men's minds were affected by a universal enthusiasm, it was easy for them to accept as true anything they were anxious to believe. It appealed to the vanity of Frenchmen when they saw all the world seeking to pay devotion at the shrine of their liberty. And why should they question the nationality of the members of so imposing and so dignified an embassy? The Assembly received them with respect and a fair show of dignity. Clootz made a high-flown speech about universal brotherhood, and the President made a suitable response, in which he granted permission to the delegates to be present at the Feast of the Federation, provided, when they returned to their homes, they would tell what they had seen in France, the land of liberty and equality. Many of them, it is safe to say, never got beyond the borders of France, perhaps not outside the limits of Paris. They quietly returned to their humble occupations, proud of having taken part as representatives of foreign lands and empires in the great Jubilee of the world's freedom. The nation was intoxicated, and in its inebriety saw truth in fiction; fiction in truth. In its sober moments such a scene would have appeared silly, ridiculous, without meaning or purpose; but the minds of men, under the spell of the hour, affected to see in this travesty that which they hoped for,—the universal brotherhood of man. The whole thing was merely symbolical. It was a sham; for what right had these men, chosen by the crack-brained Clootz, to represent the countries they stood for? They were merely actors in a farce and had as much authority to speak for



JEAN BAPTISTE CLOOTZ

From an engraving by Bonneville

the lands they represented as an actor has to speak for a king whom he personates in a play upon the stage.

All France enthusiastically prepared for the National Federation; delegates were chosen to represent every village, town, district, and province in the kingdom, and as the happy day came on apace, every road leading to Paris was crowded with pilgrims on their way to the national shrine. They had the ardor and the enthusiasm of the crusaders of old, and they enlivened their march to the capital by song and music. Every house on the road, no matter how humble, had its doors wide open to welcome the travellers. Every town through which they passed gave them hearty greeting, food, and shelter. Flags and banners were flying, people cheering, bands playing, cannon booming, and all France seemed to be quickened by a new impulse, the impulse of a people just emancipated from the thraldom of tyranny, and feeling the ecstasy of a new-born liberty.

Michelet, in referring to this period, says that he received a letter from an octogenarian who, many years after the celebration, described it with fervent and affecting enthusiasm, and the historian adds, "Oh! what must the flame have been since the ashes are so warm."

It was feared by many that Paris, during the celebration, while crowded with strangers, would be the scene of riot and tumult, but these immense crowds that had gathered in the capital were not bent on pillage nor bloodshed. They were affected by the sentiment that inspired all hearts with a

common purpose,—which purpose was the union of all interests, the peace of all France, and the universal brotherhood of man. The Revolution was never so passive and Paris never so safe from violence as during this period of jubilation.

To get ready for the event, twelve thousand to fifteen thousand men were put to work on the Field of Mars to dig out the centre and use the earth in erecting an amphitheatre for the accommodation of an audience of half a million people.

The field was a mile long and half a mile wide. The time was short, and it was soon discovered that the work could not be accomplished without an additional force of workmen. Patriotic citizens, men, women, and even children, volunteered their services, and by night and by day, amidst laughter and song, the toilers worked. Paris was in a delirium; all classes strove to make the event a success. The festival was the promise of a new era. Equality and fraternity were the watchwords. Liberty had come to stay, and in ecstasy all hearts exclaimed: If liberty cannot find a resting-place in France, in the name of God where will it abide? Surely this glorious hope of freedom will not take the place of the happiness it promises.

In unison, the thousands of willing workers joined their voices in singing in chorus, "Ça ira! Ça ira!" Yes, it will come. The law of the great legislator will be fulfilled. "He that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." It was not the wild frenzied "Ça ira!" of '93 that became the cry of mad-

ness and murder and made the human heart despair.

So vast a work was never done under contract in so short a time. It was a labor of love. It was begun on the 7th of the month and finished on the 14th. Willing hands made heavy work light. Class distinctions were ignored, the barriers of caste were leveled. The cobbler and the chevalier chatted pleasantly; plebeian and patrician, philosopher and fool, nun and harlot, prince and vagrant, high born lady and market dame, worked side by side. Madame du Barry may have smiled on St. Just, and a duchess may have removed her glove to shake hands with a soiled laborer. The legends may be very close to the truth. The day of universal peace and love had come; all hearts joined to welcome the rising of the sun of freedom that bathed the whole world in the splendor and the glory of its regenerating light.

The inns and hotels of Paris were overflowing. Private houses were opened and accommodations furnished for visitors; there were no strangers,—all were friends and brothers. A common joy and hope had made them one in affection and had united them in sentiment. There was one day at least, be it said to the glory of the Revolution, when France felt the impulse that springs from the love of humanity and the sentiment of a common brotherhood.

Ridiculous as this celebration was in some of its features, emotional almost to the degree of hysteria, its sentimentality at times artificial and morbid, still it must be admitted that it inspired

a love for France and all mankind, and created a wish and a hope in the hearts of the people for the whole world's peace and regeneration. To be sure, these sentiments did not last long; but while they did, they were sincere, and France had a respite from hate.

The 14th of July, in due course of time, arrived; the morning dawned dark and gloomy; nature frowned upon the occasion, for the clouds were heavy and black and the rain came down in torrents. Gay banners, rich costumes, brilliant uniforms were drenched; flags clung like wet rags to their staffs and would not greet the breeze; plumes and feathers and flowers drooped under the steady downpour. The vast amphitheatre was turned into a muddy ditch, but the people, notwithstanding the fact that they were wet to the skin, and that their garments were bedraggled, rejoiced in their hearts, and defied the elements.

Citizen La Fayette pranced around and across the field on his white charger, his name ringing in acclamation from the generous multitude that rose time and again to greet him. He was the central figure of the féte, outshining the glory of the king. It was one of La Fayette's great days. To him it was rich in meaning and in promise. . To no one in all that vast throng did the sentiments of the occasion appeal more strongly than to this plebeian marquis, with the love of man in his heart and with a devoted loyalty to France.

Louis was seated upon a throne under a canopy spangled with golden *fleurs-de-lis;* the queen and her suite sat behind him. The President of the

Assembly, representing the sovereignty of the nation, occupied a seat, not a throne, surrounded by the deputies. Mirabeau had made every effort to secure the Presidency for the period covering the days of the festival, but he had been thwarted in his ambition by La Fayette. The Marquis de Bonnay, a mere figurehead, had secured the honor.

In the centre of the amphitheatre stood the altar, at which Talleyrand officiated as the hierarch of the *fête*. To assist him were one hundred choristers, swinging censers, and three hundred priests in white surplices and broad tri-color sashes. The church, clothed in the symbol of the Revolution, paid homage to the monster that was to destroy her. In the field, in serried ranks, were one hundred thousand of the National Guard.

"Don't make me laugh," said the cynical Talleyrand to La Fayette, as he rose to celebrate the solemn high mass of the Roman Church. To this cold-hearted priest the celebration was a pageant without meaning. His soul did not respond to the sentiment and emotion of the occasion. To him it was a mere show—insignificant, silly, ridiculous. The music of the Te Deum was executed by twelve hundred musicians, and the religious exercises were solemn and impressive.

The bishop blessed the banners, and they were unfurled and fluttered in the breeze like myriads of wings till the air was full of color.

La Fayette took the oath to the nation. The king solemnly swore to defend the constitution. The queen held up the dauphin and consecrated him to France amidst the plaudits and cheers of

that great concourse of people. "Long live the king!" "Long live the queen!" "Long live the dauphin!" cried the exultant multitude in the ecstasy of patriotic emotion. Cheers and music filled the air, swords flashed, banners waved, cannon boomed, and France, to the very centre, felt the thrill of a new life.

The weather changed, the rain ceased, and the sun came out from behind the clouds as if to give assurance that all nature rejoiced with France in her regeneration. If it were an augury, the conditions should have been reversed. The celebration should have begun with sunshine and ended in a storm.

The festivities continued for several days. There was dancing on the streets, in the public squares, and on the very spot where a year before had stood the Bastile, that hated dungeon of agony and despair. Citizens, strangers to each other, would stop on the highways and exchange greetings and congratulations.

So long as the visiting Federates remained, the festivities continued, but gradually the throng of strangers dispersed, the delegates returned to their homes, dancing ceased, merriment subsided, joy and smiles left the faces of men, and Paris settled down again to the stern and bitter work of the Revolution.

Alas! the great Federation, after all, was only a pageant,—it was but the expression, the emphasis of a fleeting emotion. It was one of the many ironies of the Revolution.

Under all this fervid avowal of human brother-

hood and loyalty to the king were smouldering the fires that were soon to be blown into a devouring flame by passion and hate. The Revolution halted on its way only for a week. It stopped to watch a play, a comedy that was to be followed by a tragedy, dire and dreadful.

Peace! Peace! there was no peace. Violence and disorder soon prevailed. The mob grew restless and turbulent. The struggle had been only half fought out and worse was yet to follow.

Radical revolutionary ideas at this time were spreading rapidly in every direction and especially were they taking deep root in the minds of the soldiers of the line. Political agitators were reaching the soldiers by distributing pamphlets and journals that taught the new doctrines. The propaganda was well organized and effective.

The officers, in the vast majority of instances, were pronounced royalists and they adopted most stringent measures to prevent the distribution of this inflammatory literature, the teachings of which, they believed, were demoralizing the *morale* and discipline of the army, destroying the sentiment of loyalty to the king and fostering a spirit of mutiny. But an incident took place in the latter part of August, 1790, that for a time caused a reaction, delayed the progress of the Revolution, and gave the court party new hope. It was called by the radicals the "Massacre," but by the royalists, merely the "Affair of Nancy."

The National Assembly, early in the year 1790, had decreed an increase in the pay of the soldiers,

but the officers at Nancy having charge of the accounts delayed in every possible way the payment of the money due. The French soldiers appointed a committee to wait upon the officers, and the committee insisted upon an inspection of the accounts. They succeeded in compelling the payment of a large sum that had been for months in arrears. The Swiss soldiers, hearing of the success of their brothers in arms, appointed a committee of two to wait on the French soldiers and ascertain from them the details of the plan they had adopted, and which had resulted so successfully.

The officers commanding the Swiss regiment were so incensed at the audacity of subordinates, who would dare to ask for information which would enable them to secure their rights, that the arrest of the ringleaders was ordered, and, after a hearing, they were publicly scourged in the presence of the troops and of the inhabitants of the town. It was an unjust punishment, a cruel humiliation. Their only crime was in endeavoring to secure that which rightfully belonged to them. The anger of the French soldiers was aroused by such injustice and cruelty, and they took under their protection the soldiers that had been punished, escorted them through the town in honor, and compelled the officers to pay the men damages for the whipping. Here was mutiny indeed, and in its most flagrant form.

The Swiss Regiment was the famous Chateau-Vieux that had been ordered on the 14th of July to fire upon the citizens, but had refused to obey the command. This conduct had endeared them

to the people and there was no regiment more popular in all France.

It was rumored that the French officers were about to carry the regimental chest across the frontier. The soldiers thereupon seized the chest and afterwards sent a delegation to Paris to lay the facts before the Assembly and to explain their conduct. The ambassadors, upon reaching the capital, were arrested by La Fayette and thrown into prison. The Assembly took the matter, at once, under consideration, decreed that the soldiers were mutineers, guilty of treason, and ordered the punishment of the ringleaders.

Chevalier Guiot de Malseigne, a brave and reckless officer, was directed to proceed at once to Nancy and see that the decree was enforced.

Malseigne entered upon the discharge of his duty with all the ardor of his nature, and with the determination of a trained soldier who believed that disobedience and mutiny were crimes that merited the severest punishment, and he was determined, so far as he was concerned, that no time should be lost in carrying into execution the decree of the Assembly.

Malseigne was not the wisest man who could have been chosen for the task; he was wanting in judicial temperament; he had the roystering spirit of the barracks, but his courage was beyond all question; he had proved it on the field of battle and in personal encounter. Many stories are told of his wonderful prowess; he was a veritable d'Artagnan. Upon one occasion, believing that his honor had been wounded by a fellow-

officer, he coolly closed the door of the room in which they were quarreling and challenged the offender. In the struggle that ensued, the officer drove his sword through Malseigne's body and pinned him to the wall. The Chevalier, however, did not surrender nor ask for quarter, but waited his opportunity, and when the sword was withdrawn, rushed upon his antagonist and made short work of him, stretching him out a corpse upon the floor. He then opened the door, wounded and bleeding as he was, handed his sword to an officer, and surrendered himself to the law. He was tried in a military court and acquitted.

At another time, while in a church in one of the provinces where a riot was threatened, he drew his sword and solemnly prayed God to pardon him for the blood he was about to shed. The peasants heard his supplication. There was no riot, no further tumult.

When this bold-spirited, hot-tempered fellow reached Nancy, and made known his errand of vengeance, the troops, who were in an angry mood, threatened to arrest him; he straightway plucked out his sword, cut his way through their ranks, put spurs to his horse, and rode with the speed of light to Luneville. Here he was seized by soldiers supposed to be loyal, surrendered to his pursuers, carried back to Nancy, and thrown into prison. It was a case of the biter bitten.

General Bouillé, a soldier of the old school and of the old order, who was not in sympathy with the Revolution, and who had refused to take the oath to the constitution, was at Metz. He was the last

man in the kingdom to dally with insubordination. Soldiers could have no grievances, no matter how great, that could, in his eyes, excuse mutiny. With seven hundred men of the National Guard and three thousand six hundred German mercenaries, he marched in quick time to Nancy. He ordered the immediate release of Malseigne. His order was obeyed, and the doughty Chevalier was set at liberty.

The French troops that had mutinied marched out of the town, but the Swiss guarding one of the gates, either misunderstanding the matter or deciding to persist in rebellion, prepared for an attack. They unlimbered their cannon as the regiments of Bouillé advanced, and prepared for action. A heroic young officer named Desilles threw himself in front of the cannon and begged the Swiss not to act rashly. He was blown to pieces. They then opened fire on the advancing column, killing at the first discharge fifty men. The conflict was now on in earnest; it lasted for upwards of three hours. Bouillé lost three hundred men. All the Swiss were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. Of those who survived the battle, twenty-one were hanged, one was broken on the wheel, and the others sent to the galleys.

The Assembly, on motion of Mirabeau, honored Bouillé with a vote of thanks; the king gave him special recognition, and added additional territory to his command. A public funeral was decreed for the dead of his army.

The Parisian mob went mad over the massacre and, aroused by the blatant and fiery appeals of

the demagogues, they marched through the streets threatening to hang the ministers. The ears of even Necker were assailed by the curses of the rabble. The fury was of short duration. La-Fayette dispersed the crowd and quiet was restored. Marat and Desmoulins shrieked in despair, believing that all was lost. Loustallot, editor of the *Revolutions de Paris*, died of a broken heart. The Royalists were jubilant; a reaction set in at once; the tri-color was trampled under foot, and the white cockade of the Bourbons was, for a time, in the ascendancy.

CHAPTER XXV

NECKER RESIGNS—RABAUT ST. ETIENNE'S MOTION—MIRABEAU ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY—HIS ADDRESS TO THE QUAKERS—EMIGRATION OF THE KING'S AUNTS—MIRABEAU AT THE CLUB OF THE JACOBINS

NECKER, fiddling and figuring away, while Rome was burning, was lost sight of in the excitement of the times, and sending in his resignation on September 3, 1790, quietly slipped across the frontier and nestled snugly in Switzerland. Swept away in the whirl, he was thrown upon a foreign shore like wreckage. "Little man, vain man, your laurels are withered, they will grow green no more," screamed Marat, the vulture of the Revolution, as a parting salutation.

Vainly did Necker employ his time writing and distributing pamphlets in an effort to show all Europe that the monarchy was lost because his plans had not been adopted and his advice had not been followed. He was neither listened to nor believed. A politician out of power or place has but few hearers when he undertakes to explain his mistakes or to excuse his failures. He is as tiresome as the man who nurses and airs a personal grievance.

Necker's qualities of mind never fitted him for the turmoil of a revolution. His puritanical morality and prudish respectability never allowed

him to make combinations with men whose code of morals he could not reconcile with his own ideas of propriety. Guizot says: "The great financial talents of M. Necker, his probity, his courage, had caused illusions as to his political talents; useful in his day and in his degree, he was no longer equal to the task." "Finance," says Stephens, "cannot be separated from politics, and for Necker to carry on his little plans without regard to broad considerations of political expediency, was utterly ridiculous."

The same writer says that "Mirabeau was not only the greatest statesman of the Revolution, but he was also its greatest financier, and many of the measures by which, in after years, Claviere and Cambon gained credit, are suggested in Mirabeau's notes to the court."

If Necker had only advised with Mirabeau, his administration would have been strengthened and France greatly benefited. It was the idea of his own self-sufficiency that wrought his ruin. "And what kind of man is this M. Necker," exclaimed Mirabeau, "that he should be so treated? You might as well make an issue in a wooden leg as to give him advice, for he certainly would not follow it. It is thus that kings are led to the scaffold. He looks upon me as a madman with lucid intervals."

Bourrienne, in his Memoirs of Napoleon, says: "The concessions of Necker were those of a man ignorant of the first principles of the government of mankind. It was he that overturned the monarchy and brought Louis XVI. to the scaffold.

Marat, Danton, Robespierre himself, did less mischief to France. Necker was the author of all the evils which desolated France during the Revolution, and all the blood that was shed rests upon his head." This is too severe; it is sheer exaggeration and not worthy of consideration, for it passes beyond the limits of just criticism. Even to intimate that he was responsible for all the evils that desolated France, is doing him a grave injustice; a statement so sweeping is without any foundation in truth. He was an academic, a theoretic financier, who, under normal conditions, would have carried his portfolio with dignity, and would have borne his office with honor. He was a man of high ideals, of sterling integrity, of purity of life, and of fervent partriotism, but totally unfitted for a storm and stress period, and without the ability to cope with the men and the conditions of the Revolution. He was wofully wanting in the essential qualities of the politician, and his personal vanity and self-confidence stood in the way of the successful administration of his office.

In November, 1790, Rabaut St. Etienne proposed in the Assembly that the National Guard should be composed only of citizens who were taxpayers. The motion had for its object the disqualification of the canaille. Mirabeau, with all his might, argued in favor of the motion.

At the evening session of the Jacobins, on the following day, Robespierre, in an earnest speech, urged the members to do all in their power to defeat the obnoxious measure, describing it as discriminating in character and aristocratic in pur-

pose. Mirabeau, who at that time was president of the Club, fearing the effect of Robespierre's eloquence, endeavored to cut off further debate by ruling the speaker out of order, but Robespierre, insisting upon his right to continue without interruption, called upon his friends to secure him fair play. His supporters at once rallied to his aid; they shouted to him to go on, and encouraged him to defy the president. The meeting was thrown into an uproar. Mirabeau, perceiving that the battle was going against him, rang his bell to restore order, but, by this action, instead of quieting the tumult, only added to the din and disorder. At last, in his most imperious manner, he commanded silence, but failing to quiet the tumult he cried out: "Let my friends surround me," but only a few answered his call. Mirabeau suffered a stinging defeat. He was losing his hold on the ultra-radicals; they were beginning to array themselves against his leadership.

About this time, in order to get rid of the popular leaders of the Assembly, a number of skilled swordsmen among the royalists entered into a plot to challenge personally those deputies who offended the king by their disloyal and treasonable utterances,—the purpose of the royalists being to humiliate or brand with cowardice those who declined the challenges, or to disable, with their superior skill, those who were foolish enough to fight. All sorts of excuses were trumped up and challenges flew thick and fast. Mirabeau had a list as long as his arm, but seeing through the purpose of his enemies, he publicly stated that he would accom-

modate them in regular order after he got through his work in the Assembly; that he owed a duty to his constituents, and that he would not run the risk of losing his life by meeting, under the code, men whose only purpose was to injure the popular cause by disabling or killing its leaders and representatives.

Mirabeau, in February, 1791, was elected president of the Assembly. This was an honor that he had longed for and, after patient waiting, although late, it came to him after it had been conferred upon forty-three other members. (The term of office was only a fortnight). Mirabeau had suffered several prior defeats. He was at last elected by a large majority. He bore the office with great dignity, and won the admiration of his bitterest enemies by his impartial judgment. He controlled the convention, his rulings were clear, fair, and apt. He dispatched the business and kept the debates within limits. He was ever at his post, and physical suffering could not keep him away. His body, at times, was racked with pain. He had acute inflammation of the eyes, and frequently came to the Assembly with his head swathed in bandages, the blood trickling down his cheeks from leech-bites. "He was frightful," says Malouet, "but never more active, more eloquent."

It was no easy task to preside over a body so stormy in its deliberations as the National Assembly. Mirabeau seems to have been the only presiding officer who kept the members well in hand. Parliamentary rules have never been as closely observed in deliberative assemblies in France as

in England and in America. During the Revolution they were almost totally disregarded. "There was as much difference," says Dumont, "between the debates of the National Assembly and those of the English Parliament as between the scientific sieges and marches of the Austrians and the irregular combats and skirmishes of the Croats."

On the floor, epithets were bandied from one speaker to another; personalities were indulged in, and noisy interruptions were of constant occurrence. The galleries were generally crowded with an unruly audience that applauded and hissed, in turn, the speakers, and loudly passed comments upon questions under consideration; at times, so seriously interrupting the proceedings that it became impossible to continue the discussions. A big bell instead of a gavel, in the hands of the president, for the purpose of calling the body to order, greatly added, in times of excitement, to the noise and confusion. Peddlers sold fruit and news-boys cried out the latest editions of the Revolutionary journals.

"Happily," wrote Camille Desmoulins in the *Lanterne*, "the incorruptible galleries are there which always stand on the side of the patriots. They represent the tribunes who assisted the discussions of the Senate on a bench, and had the veto right. They represent the capital, and, fortunately, the constitution is framed under the batteries of the capital."

One day an attempt was made to silence the galleries, but Volney, one of the deputies, rose and

exclaimed: "Why should we do that? The men who sit there are our masters; we are only their workmen; they have the right to censure or applaud us as they like!" So craven a spirit as this simply encouraged the mob and increased the disorder. During the Reign of Terror, the legislation was virtually directed by the rabble in the galleries; even the floor of the hall, at times, was invaded by the crowd that openly insulted and threatened those members whose utterances they did not approve.

Lally Tollendal, after the scenes of the 5th and 6th of October, withdrew from this "Cavern of Cannibals," as he called the National Assembly, and retired to a foreign land, declaring "it was beyond his strength to endure any longer the bloodshed, the assassinations, the insulted sovereign, the menaced queen, . . . the composure of Bailly, the audacity of Mirabeau, and the laughter of Barnave."

Mirabeau was most happy in the addresses he made to visiting deputations during his incumbency of the office of president. Especially was this so upon the occasion of the visit of a committee of Quakers that applied to the Assembly to be allowed to practise their religion in France and to enjoy immunity from military service, and from the taking of oaths in legal proceedings. He was to have made answer, at the morning session, on the 10th of February, 1791, but having had a severe attack of ophthalmia, he was not able to speak until the evening, and, although suffering intensely, he insisted upon delivering an address to

the delegation. The following are his remarks; they are thoughtful, reasonable, and display a most tolerant spirit:

"The Quakers who have fled from tyrants and persecutors could but address themselves with confidence to those legislators who have been the first to reduce into laws the Rights of Man; and it is possible that regenerated France—France in the bosom of peace, for which she always will recommend the most inviolable respect, and which she desires for all other nations—may, perhaps, become a happy Pennsylvania.

"As a philanthropic system, your principles command our admiration; they call to our recollection that the first cradle of each society was a family, united by its manners, by its affections, and by its wants.

"The examination of your doctrines, considered as opinions, do not concern us. The movements and the transports of a man's thought are property which he would not enjoy in common. That sacred domain places man in a hierarchy more elevated than civil society. As a citizen, he adopts only one form of government; as a thinking man, he has no country save the universe. As a religious system your doctrines will not, therefore, be the object of our deliberations, for the intercourse of each individual with the Almighty is independent of all political institutions. Between God and the heart of each man, what government shall dare to interpose?

"As social maxims, your claims must be submitted to the discussion of the legislative body. It

will examine whether the form you observe to notify births and marriages gives sufficient authenticity to that filiation of the human race which the distinction of property renders necessary, independent of good morals.

"It will discuss if a declaration,—the falsity whereof would incur the penalties established against false witnesses and perjuries,—would not be in reality a false oath. Estimable citizens! you deceive yourselves; you have already taken that civic oath which every man worthy of being free regards rather as a pleasure than a duty. You have not called God to witness, but you have attested your conscience; and a pure conscience, is it not as a cloudless sky? Is it not a ray of the divinity?

"You say, further, that an article of your religion forbids you to take arms and to kill, under any pretext whatsoever. That, without doubt, is a beautiful, philosophical principle which offers such a worship to humanity. But take care that the defence of yourselves and of your fellow-men be not equally a religious duty. Would you have stooped to tyrants, rather than have broken that principle? Since we have acquired and won liberty for you and for ourselves, why would you refuse to preserve it? Would your brethren of Pennsylvania have suffered the savages to have devoured their wives, their children, and their old men rather than repulse them with violence? And the stupid tyrants, the ferocious conquerors,—what are they but savages?

"The Assembly, in its wisdom, will discuss all

your requests, and if ever I meet a Quaker, I will say to him: My brother, if thou hast the right to be free, thou hast a right to oppose any who would make thee a slave.

"Since thou lovest thy fellow-creature, let him not be devoured by tyranny; that would be to slay him thyself. Thou desirest peace; well then, is it not weakness that causes war? A universal resistance would be a universal peace."

"Towards the end of 1790," writes Michelet, "there was for a moment an apparent halt, little or nothing stirring; nothing but a great number of vehicles crowding at the barriers, and the roads thronged with emigrants." The rich were hurrying away from the kingdom in great numbers; six thousand passports were issued in five days.

More and more the people were being convinced that the nobles were quitting France only to invade it. The king, accordingly, was held as hostage to insure the good behavior of his friends. It was the common belief that if the king should escape, he would return at the head of an invading army, not only to recover his throne, but to destroy the constitution. How much better it would have been for France if the king had escaped! He was not the man who could have led the armies of the allies in an endeavor to recover his crown. He would not have inspired enthusiasm and courage among his followers in a foreign land any more than he did in his own country, nor would he have advised any more wisely among strangers than he did at home among his friends. He was in no

sense heroic; he had no quality of leadership; he induced pity and sympathy in the hearts of men, but he was the last one on earth to have drawn his sword, rallied his followers, and led an army or a crusade to recover his kingdom. The desertion of his country and the abandonment of his throne would have made him a weak, a contemptible, figure in the eyes of all Europe. He would have been but a royal refugee seeking shelter in a foreign court, after having made no determined effort to save his throne while he was in his own land. In exile he would have been without influence. On the other hand, detained as a captive in his own capital, he aroused the anger and the sympathy of every monarch and court party in Europe, and consequently all the powers of Europe allied themselves against France. Had he escaped, the Revolution would not have been disgraced by his cruel and unwarranted execution, and the republic might have been sooner and more firmly established. But at this time, Frenchmen could not imagine a government without a head, and that head not a king. Public sentiment was not yet in favor of a republic.

In February of 1791, the King's aunts were making preparation to emigrate. Easter was approaching and they were anxious to observe the festival in a land more orthodox than France, and where priests were not bound by oath to revolutionary doctrines. They were two old maiden ladies, the daughters of Louis XV. They had long since passed out of the public eye. They belonged to a past age and had nothing in com-

mon with the conditions that surrounded them, but when it was known that they intended to depart, and that they had applied for passports, the whole country was thrown into excitement and apprehension; for their departure, it was thought, was preparatory to the flight of the king. The passports were refused, and Louis was urged by the municipal council to prevent the journey. Mirabeau's advice was to persuade quietly the princesses to abandon their project; he contended that their departure would excite suspicion and arouse the anger of the people, but the king would not heed the advice. Louis sent word to his aunts to come at once to Paris, and, disguised as servants, they hastened to the Tuileries. Here they continued their preparations, and when arrangements were completed, quietly set out upon their journey to Rome. The news of their departure having been sent abroad, the mob quickly gathered and swirled around the palace of the king. The gates of the garden had been closed but a few minutes before the mob arrived, otherwise the scenes of the 6th of October, in the palace of Versailles, might have been re-enacted at the Tuileries.

The carriages of the princesses continued as far as Moret, where they were stopped by the authorities, but at once released under the demand of one hundred chasseurs. The royal ladies then sped to Arnay-le-duc, where they were again detained.

The Assembly seriously took up the question for discussion and it was hotly debated. "Is there any law against travelling," inquired Mirabeau.

" The safety of the people," replied the radicals. " Obedience to the law is the true safety of the people," retorted Mirabeau.

While the discussion of this most important matter was going on, the two old maiden aunts of the king were waiting impatiently at Arnay-le-duc to be released, that they might continue their journey. Robespierre and some other radicals insisted upon the return of the ladies, but finally Menou laughed the case out of court by saying: " Europe will be astonished to learn that a great Assembly has spent several days in deciding whether two old women shall hear mass at Paris or at Rome." They were allowed to proceed on their way.

Mirabeau advocated the liberty of emigration as one of the most sacred rights of man, who, " not being attached by roots to the soil, ought not to be attached to it by anything but by happiness." Chapelier then read a proposed law reported from the committee which would provide for the appointment of a commission of three members, which should appoint by name, and at their pleasure, those who were to be at liberty to leave the kingdom. Chapelier admitted that such a law would violate all principles. Murmurs arose and Mirabeau exclaimed: " Your murmurs have soothed me, your hearts respond to mine and oppose this absurd tyranny. It is a law worthy of being placed in the code of Draco and cannot find place among the decrees of the National Assembly of France. As for me, I hold myself released from every oath towards those who shall

be infamous enough to admit of a dictatorial commission."

The Left hooted him, and, turning to the deputies on that side, he said: "Yes, I swear that popularity to which I have aspired and which I have enjoyed as well as others, is not a feeble reed. I will thrust it deep into the earth and I will make it take root in the soil of justice and reason. I swear if a law against emigration is voted, I swear to disobey you." The Assembly, though astonished and overawed, rang with applause, for never before had Mirabeau shown greater force nor more completely dominated the body.

"What right of dictatorship is it," cried M. Goupil, "that M. Mirabeau exercises here?"

Some proposed an adjournment. Mirabeau again mounted the tribune. "I have not given you permission to speak," said the President, but Mirabeau, disdaining to notice the remark, and commanding the attention of the house, exclaimed: "I beg my interrupters to remember that I have all my life combated tyranny and that I will combat it wherever I find it. I beg M. Goupil to recollect that he was under a mistake sometime since in regard to a Catiline whose dictatorship he this day attacks. I beg the Assembly to remark that the question of adjournment, though apparently simple, involves others; for example, it presupposes that a law is to be made."

Shouts of disapproval came from the Left. Then it was that Mirabeau rose in the pride of all his strength,—it was almost the last grand effort of his life, in the Assembly,—and turning to the

benches whence came the interruption, where sat Barnave, Duport, the Lameths, and their followers, he cried out in tones of thunder: "Silence! aux trente voix" (Silence! the thirty voices).

Mirabeau's motion was not carried, but he succeeded in preventing the passage of a law against emigration. At the same time, however, he had aroused the fury of the radicals on the Left. His imperious command to the coterie of "thirty" had mortally wounded their pride, for not only had they been silenced, but humbled, and they eagerly longed to avenge the insult and the humiliation. Their anger consumed them and they plotted to overthrow and destroy him.

Mirabeau had been invited, with others, to dine that evening at d'Aiguillon's, but when he called at the door, he was refused admission. It was thought this rebuff might deter him from attending the night session at the Jacobins. It was decided, however, that if he did put in an appearance a severe attack should be made upon him. He was ready to meet men so mean and oppose methods so contemptible. "The vast expansiveness," says Lamartine, "of his mighty soul had no resemblance with the paltry impulses of demagogues." Those who thus sought to intimidate him, little knew the mettle of the man. He saw through the game and at once accepted the challenge. He would not submit to be assailed and sacrificed in his absence and he did not hesitate to renew the contest single-handed with those men, whom, in the afternoon, he had silenced in the presence of all France. He knew, too, the bitter-

ness with which men fight, whose pride has been stung and humbled.

No sooner had he reached the Club than the struggle began. Duport assailed him bitterly, accusing him and La Fayette of plotting to steal the king from Paris. Lameth followed in an attack even more savage, denouncing him personally in a speech filled with abuse and calumny, and closed amid the wildest demonstrations of approval. The tide had turned against Mirabeau, and it looked as if he must be overwhelmed. Deserted, friendless, and alone in the camp of his enemies, it seemed impossible to repel attacks so bitter, but when he rose to reply, his dauntless courage and his lofty composure compelled the attention, even the respect, of his audience. His personality was so overpowering, his eloquence so transcendent, his indignation so fierce, and his defiance so courageous, that he aroused, even in the hearts of his enemies, admiration for a power so commanding. He began his speech, interrupted by hisses, and he closed it amid plaudits and cheers. As he left the hall, he remarked, "You cannot drive me from the Club; only ostracism shall separate me from you."

There are several accounts given of this remarkable meeting at the Jacobins on the evening of February 28, 1791. Camille Desmoulins, whose love and admiration for Mirabeau had turned to bitter hatred, describes the great orator as a pitiable and contemptible figure, impotent in his rage, writhing under the lash of Duport and Lameth. He pictures him as a Christ on Calvary, the per-

spiration dripping from under his mane, pressed out by agony. He declares that his shallow sophistries and pompous oratory availed not to deceive the clear-sighted, patriotic Jacobins. It is true, he adds, that he was not ejected from the Club, and when he left there was some applause. His description of the Jacobin Club as the new Calvary and Mirabeau as the Christ, was not only sacrilegious, but was susceptible of a meaning entiely different from what his heated and disordered imagination intended.

Desmoulins was a blind partisan, influenced at all times by his prejudices and hatred, and, above all, controlled by his emotions. When he admits that Mirabeau was not ejected from the Club and that he retired with applause, it may be taken for granted that Mirabeau's triumph was complete. When he describes him as writhing under the lash of his enemies, it may be assumed that this was before he had a chance to reply.

McCarthy refers to a letter written by Mr. A. W. Miles to Lord Rodney on April 1, 1791, in which the scene is described. The writer says he was present at "this extraordinary denunciation," that he sat next to Charles Lameth, who, while Mirabeau, trembling and pale, was defending himself in the tribune, frequently interrupted him by calling him vile names; that the Marquis de Saint Huruge also indulged in like conduct. "You would have been astonished," he further writes, "at the miserable answer Mirabeau made to an accusation in which justice, humanity, and policy must have furnished him with abundant matter for

defence." The writer closes his account by saying that "amid plaudits he descended from the same tribune which amid groans, reproaches, and hisses, he had mounted in a panic, and in which he was some time before he could obtain a hearing." The argument of Mirabeau did not specially impress Mr. Miles, but Mirabeau, on this matter, was, no doubt, a better judge of what should be said than his English critic. Like Camille, Mr. Miles admits that although Mirabeau was greeted with hisses when he ascended the tribune, at the end of his reply, he won the applause of his hearers.

Another account, and a most interesting one, is given by an eye-witness named Oelsner. He was a foreigner, a Swiss. He was in no sense prejudiced, and took no part in the Revolution. He only saw one brave man assailed from all sides, valiantly fighting his battle alone. He was greatly impressed by the scene and describes it most vividly. His nervous system was so affected by the wild tumult and confusion incident to the debate, that he was ill for several days afterwards. The attacks on Mirabeau were so fierce that Oelsner feared for Mirabeau's personal safety. In the reply to Duport, Mirabeau had not reached to his full power, but when he rose to answer Lameth, who had referred to all the follies and vices of Mirabeau's early life, his vehemence was terrific. An attempt had been made by the president, after Lameth's speech, to force an adjournment and thus prevent Mirabeau's replying to his opponent; but against all opposition, he mounted the tribune and demanded to be heard. "It was a hot combat,"

says Oelsner. "He put forth all the resources of his genius to vanquish his young and agile adversary. He clutched him and his companions with a hand of iron and of fire. He wrenched from them their false arms and struck incurable blows. His boiling wrath gushed over all who had impugned him. Truths which no one had ever dared to breathe in the Club, crashed like claps of thunder through the hall. His boldness, his noble bearing, petrified the audience with astonishment. Thus he put down the furious, and there was not one from whom he did not force, if not applause, at least, high admiration. Even in the National Assembly, Mirabeau had never been more masterful."

After this, there was open war between Mirabeau and the Jacobins. He appreciated and understood what it all meant, for he told his sister that he had signed his death warrant. In the Assembly and in the Clubs, he was most bitterly assailed, and the revolutionary journals attacked him on all sides in a mad desire and endeavor to destroy his popularity.

"I shall die," he said, "before anything is accomplished. The members of the Assembly wish to govern the king instead of to govern through him, but soon, neither he nor they will govern. A vile faction will impose its yoke on both alike and cover France with its atrocities."

CHAPTER XXVI

MIRABEAU'S CLOSING DAYS—HIS DEATH—HIS FUNERAL—WAS HE POISONED?

"How weary and tired I am!" wrote Mirabeau, in December, 1790. He was yielding to the excessive strain. "I am dying as by slow fire," he remarked to Dumont. Work and dissipation had sapped his vigor, and the giant was reeling to his death.

On March 27, 1791, as he left the Assembly, he said to La Marck, a large proprietor of mines, whose property was endangered by proposed legislation, and whose fortune, in consequence, was at stake: "Your case is won, but as for me, I am a dead man." On that day he had summoned all his strength for a last effort, and the last effort was made in behalf of his friend. He had spoken five times, and, at the close of the day's session, was greatly exhausted. He spent the night at Argenteuil and succeeded in obtaining some rest, but in the morning, his sufferings increased. He took a hot bath which, in a measure, revived him. In the evening he attended the Italian Opera, but was compelled to leave before the performance was over, and was driven home rapidly. The hand of death was upon him. Doctors and medicine cannot save him now. To his friend, Cabanis, he said: "Thou art a great physician, but the author of the wind that overthrows all things; of the water

that penetrates and fructifies all things; of the fire that vivifies all things,—He is a greater physician still than thou."

All Paris hears the news and is hushed. The people raise their hats and step lightly as they pass the door of his home. Carriages are turned aside at the street corners, and no sound is allowed to disturb the rest and slumber of the patient.

Crowds gather at nightfall and stand until the morning dawns, waiting to hear the reports from the sick man's chamber. The king sends twice a day to inquire about him. Desmoulins fears that Louis will call in person, and thus secure the idolatry of the people. The Assembly is hourly informed of his condition. Barnave heads a delegation to convey the sympathy of his colleagues. The contemptible Lameth refuses to serve on the committee. "I knew him to be a knave," said Mirabeau, "but I did not think him a fool."

He is informed of the debates in the Convention and specially in relation to foreign diplomatic questions. "Pitt," he says, "is the minister of preparations. He governs by what he menaces rather than by what he actually does,—if I live, I will give him some trouble."

The fever consumes him, but his intellect is still clear. "Come and shave me," he says to his valet, "and bathe me and dress me carefully and completely. Open the windows and let me gaze once more on the flowers and the sky." Looking at the sun, he exclaims, "If it be not God, it is His cousin-german."

When they tell him of the silent, sympathizing

throng in the street below, he remarks: "Oh! it is well to devote one's life to the people. It is well that I should have given them my whole life." "I shall die to-day," he says, turning to his physician, Cabanis. "All that can now be done is to envelop one's self in perfumes, to crown one's self with flowers, to surround one's self with music, that one may sink quietly into everlasting sleep."

The priest of the parish calls to offer his ministrations, but Mirabeau smilingly says that he would gladly admit him if it were not that he has in his house his ecclesiastical superior, the Archbishop of Autun. Talleyrand giving absolution,—God save the mark!

His aged mother calls, but is turned from the door. This is without his knowledge, but, in truth, she deserves but little better treatment.

"Hold this head," he says to Frochot, "the greatest in France,—I wish I could bequeath it to you."

He hands to Talleyrand a manuscript speech on wills, to be read in the Assembly after his death. "It will be rather a joke," he says, "to hear a speech against wills from a man who is dead and who has made his own."

Turning to his friend, La Marck, he exclaims: "I carry in my heart the dirge of the monarchy. After my death, its remains will be the spoil of the factions."

"Well, my dear connoisseur of courageous deaths," he says, again addressing his friend, "are you satisfied with me?" The answer given is not recorded. Falling into a sleep, he is sud-

denly aroused by the booming of cannon. "What!" he exclaims; "have we already the funeral of Achilles?"

"You have promised to spare me needless suffering," he says to his friends, "and you must keep your word and give me opium." They put a cup of water to his lips; he seems satisfied. "Dormir," he mutters, and the mighty spirit sinks to sleep, to rest. The doctor feels his pulse and, in a whisper, says, lest he should disturb the sleeper: "Il ne souffre plus,"—his agony is over.

"He dramatized his death," was the apt expression of Talleyrand. The scene was set, as if upon a stage; it was theatrical to a degree. The actor forgot no detail, he played his part impressively, he had all France for an audience. Mirabeau, in his death, tried to win the applause of mankind rather than to secure the forgiveness of heaven. It was the death of a pagan without hope, without remorse, without a prayer for pardon.

He died in the forty-second year of his age, in a period that should have been the very vigor of his life,—"in bold manhood's hardy prime." "But he lived," says Brougham, "in times when each week staggered under the load of events that had formerly made centuries to bend, and he thus lived long enough to show all that he could have attained if his life had been prolonged to the usual period."

When the news of his death was announced, all classes were affected. The city was hushed. Men spoke in whispers: "Mirabeau is dead!"

The Assembly adjourned its sittings after deciding that the delegates should attend the funeral in a body. The municipality ordered an eight days' mourning. The Jacobins passed commendatory resolutions; directed that his bust in marble should be erected, and that the second of April should ever be observed in commemoration of the anniversary of his death.

Preparations were made for a magnificent funeral, and one more imposing was never witnessed. A man to have been so honored in death must have won the honor by his deeds in life. It was a public recognition of his greatness.

All theatres and places of amusement were closed. Balls, parties, and receptions were discontinued, or, if given, the revellers were dispersed by the people, who considered all festivities as an insult to the national sorrow. On the day of the funeral, business was suspended throughout the city.

There were some, however, who did not join in this almost universal grief, for genius inspires envy. Marat, in his scurrilous journal, called upon the people to return thanks unto the gods because their most redoubtable enemy had fallen. "Riquetti is no more!" Robespierre exultingly exclaimed: "Achilles is dead! Then Troy shall not be taken." Lameth, vindictive, envious, and contemptible, sneered at the people's grief. Petion refused to attend the funeral, declaring he had read a paper showing Mirabeau's connection with the court. Camille Desmoulins denounced, in his journal, the public career and political principles

of Mirabeau, but between the lines could be read the kindly words that revealed the tender sympathy of Camille's heart. Strange to say, even the court felt a sense of relief, and the queen specially was gratified.

It was decreed by the Assembly that the new edifice of St. Genevieve should be devoted to the reception of the ashes of great men; that Honoré Riquetti Mirabeau is judged worthy of receiving that honor; that upon the front of the edifice of St. Genevieve shall be engraven the words: "Aux Grands Hommes La Patrie Reconnaisante."

Towards the close of the afternoon of the 14th of April, the funeral procession started on its way to the Pantheon. The discharge of cannon, the tolling of bells, the blare of trombones, and the low rumbling of muffled drums, announced the moving of the column. It was nearly four miles in length. One hundred thousand men were in line. Slowly and solemnly the procession wended its way through the streets. Half a million people were spectators; every foot of available space was crowded with uncovered, silent mourners. "All roofs were thronged with on-lookers, all windows, lamp-irons, branches of trees."

It was eight o'clock in the evening before the Church of St. Eustache was reached. Here a solemn high mass was celebrated, with all the pomp and solemnity of the Roman ritual. The music for the occasion was composed by the celebrated Gossec, and was most touching in its pathos. Cerutti delivered a weary eulogium on the dead statesman, after which the procession re-formed

and proceeded to the Pantheon. It was not until midnight, under the glare of torches, and with the wailing of a dirge, that the cortege reached the Church of St. Genevieve, where the body was placed alongside that of the great Descartes. A salute was fired with twenty thousand muskets, and the report shook the city to its very centre.

The remains were not allowed to rest long where a sorrowing people had placed them.

When the iron chest of Louis XVI. was discovered after the 10th of August, 1792, it revealed some of Mirabeau's transactions with the court. The Assembly veiled the bust of the great tribune, and "put his memory under arrest," pending a further examination of the papers.

The National Assembly, in November, 1793, after the report of the committee of public inquiry was submitted, decreed that "The body should be withdrawn from the Pantheon. . . . The same day that the body of Mirabeau shall be withdrawn, that of Marat shall be there transferred." It was meet that the body of the great tribune should be removed rather than lie as a neighbor to the infamous Marat. It was not until September 21, 1794, that the decree was executed. In the dead of night, the leaden coffin that contained the ashes of Mirabeau was deposited in the cemetery of St. Catharine, a graveyard set apart for criminals, in the Faubourg of St. Marcel, without any stone or tablet to mark the spot.

The remains of the monster Marat did not abide long in the Pantheon, dedicated to the memory of great men, for the people in their rage, in 1795,

dragged the body from the tomb and cast it to the dogs.

At the time of Mirabeau's death, it was rumored that he died of slow poison. The public accuser for the first Arondissement of Paris demanded that a *post-mortem* examination be made. "The violence of the illness, its rapid progress, the suddenness of the dissolution, seem to justify, to a certain extent, the supposition that the death of M. Riquetti could not be natural. It is deemed necessary to proceed to open and examine the body and to give all the publicity and authenticity possible to that examination." The examination was accordingly made and it is said that there were forty-four physicians present at the autopsy. The finding was that there were no traces of poisoning. The story runs that two young physicians were of opinion that Mirabeau had been poisoned, and so expressed themselves, but Professor Sue, one of the doctors present, took them aside and whispered: "He was not poisoned, he cannot be poisoned, do you understand that, you imprudent boys! Would you have them devour the king, the queen, the Assembly, and all of us?"

Of course, at such a time, the public mind had to be satisfied, and the temper of the people calmed.

"He was subject," says Thiers, "to frequent and sudden fainting fits. Baths containing a solution of sublimate had produced that greenish tint which was attributed to poison."

Dumont declares "there was not the slightest appearance of poison, and that idea was, therefore,

deemed totally unfounded. The complaint was acute enteritis, brought on by excesses."

To Dumont he said, some time before his death: "If I believed in slow poison, I should think myself poisoned; for I feel that I am dying by inches, that I am being consumed in a slow fire." To his sister, Madame du Saillant, when she intimated that he should be cautious about his eating and drinking, he said: "You are right, I feel it, they hold me, they will have me."

In November, 1790, he passed a cup of coffee, that had been prepared for him, to his friend Pellenc, and that gentleman suffered great pain after drinking it. It is said that the same thing happened upon another occasion with Frochot, who was taken ill after eating food that had been prepared for Mirabeau. The author of the "Mémoires d'un Pair de France" asserts that Mirabeau was poisoned. He says that Robespierre, in 1793, at a moment when he was off his guard, openly boasted of the part he had taken in the crime. "Two parties," he says, "were then laboring to accomplish the ruin of the king; a third party wished it without declaring itself: all of them were concerned to see that Louis XVI. inclined to a cordial reconciliation with the constitution, and all dreaded the sound advice which Mirabeau had it in his power to give him. It was well known that this man was the only person capable of directing affairs in such a manner as to keep the factions within the limits which they hoped to pass. As the issue of any attempt to strip him of his popularity was uncertain, it was thought

better to despatch him; but as no assassin was to be found, it was necessary to have recourse to poison. Marat furnished the recipe; it was prepared under his supervision, and he answered for its effect. How to administer it was the next question. At last it was resolved to choose the opportunity of a dinner, at which the poisonous ingredients should be introduced into the bread or wine, or certain dishes of which Mirabeau was known to be very fond. Robespierre and Petion undertook to see to the execution of this atrocious scheme, and were assisted by Fabre d'Eglantine and two or three other subordinate Orleanists. Mirabeau had no suspicion of this perfidy; but effects were manifested immediately after a party of pleasure, at which he had indulged in great intemperance. He was soon aware that he was poisoned, and told his intimate friends so, and especially Cabanis, to whom he said: 'You seek the cause of my death in my physical excesses; you will find it rather in the hatred borne me by those who wish for the overthrow of France, or those who are afraid of my ascendancy over the minds of the king and the queen.' It was impossible to drive it out of his head, that his death was not natural, but great pains were taken to prevent this opinion from getting abroad."

This story is given in detail and with careful exactness as to the facts, but it is hardly probable that Robespierre, secretive and reticent as he was, would have been so far off his guard as to have revealed his personal connection with the crime, as well as the names of his co-conspirators. There

seems to be no authority for this story but the memoirs referred to. It is strange that, if it be true, it is not known nor vouched for in other quarters.

There were many wretches in France in that day who would willingly have made way with the great tribune, and no doubt his life was constantly in peril. There is no question but that there were many men who were on intimate terms with him who would not have hesitated a moment to commit the crime if, in their opinion, their interests had required it.

He frequently received warnings to avoid the companionship of certain men, but he totally disregarded all such injunctions. It is an admitted fact that he attended a banquet, given by thirty members of the Assembly, at the suggestion of Talleyrand, and it is believed by many that at this banquet he was poisoned. Prince George of Hesse-Cassel heard that an attempt to poison Mirabeau was to be made at the banquet and he hurried to the house where it was held to warn his friend, but he was not allowed to enter nor was he permitted to get word to Mirabeau. He waited, however, until the banquet was over, when he told Mirabeau of his fears. Mirabeau answered: "It is too late; the scoundrels are quite capable of it, however." Instead of going to a doctor, he went to keep an engagement at the house of Mademoiselle Coulon, an actress of the opera. The next day, March 26, began his fatal illness.

On the other hand, his utter disregard of every

rule of health, his prodigality of life, his prodigious labors, his incontinence, his licentiousness, his frequent devotion of the twenty-four hours of the day to business and dissipation, were gradually destroying him. He challenged death and recklessly provoked its darts. No constitution, no matter how robust, could withstand abuse so constant. He made draughts upon its strength by night as well as by day. He unquestionably did enough to hasten his dissolution without the aid of poison. "Had I not lived with Mirabeau," said Dumont, "I never should have known all that can be done in one day, or rather in an interval of twelve hours. A day to him was of more value than a week or a month to others. The business which he carried on simultaneously was immense, from the conception of a project to its execution there was no time lost. To-morrow was not to him the same imposter as to most other men." And then, "after the long day's work was done," dissipation followed until dawn.

The whole matter of the poisoning is involved, the testimony is very conflicting, and in reading it one can never get beyond a reasonable doubt. To decide is simply to guess.

CHAPTER XXVII

MIRABEAU COMPARED WITH HIS COLLEAGUES—ORATOR — AUTHOR — STATESMAN — POLITICIAN—RELIGIOUS VIEWS—SLAVE TRADE

How are we to draw the portrait of this man of immoderate genius and uncontrollable passions? "I am not to be judged by ordinary rules," said Napoleon. This apparently impudent but really truthful assertion is equally appropriate in the case of Mirabeau. He was an exceptional, an extraordinary man. His talents, his powers, his passions, were gigantic. His genius fitted him for great events, for stirring, exciting times. His character was dominating, he rose in magnificent proportions above all his colleagues; the only member of the convention who, in any wise, could have approached him, was Danton, and yet the latter dwindles when a close comparison is drawn. If he had met Danton in debate, he would have overwhelmed him; in statesmanship, breadth of learning, and mental power, he was far away his superior. Barnave in no particular compares with him, except as an orator, and yet he had not that sublime eloquence born of intense feeling and emotion that characterized Mirabeau. Maury, keen, clever, witty, and sarcastic, was but a gadfly that irritated or aroused the anger of the lion.

In real statesmanship, in comprehension and grasp of intellect, Mirabeau stood alone. "He

was far the strongest best practical intellect of that time," declares Carlyle. "He was essentially," says Stephens, "a practical statesman, and that is the reason why his character is so little appreciated by Frenchmen."

In his effort to effect an alliance with La Fayette, he urged the queen to tell the General that "he (Mirabeau) is the only statesman of this country; no one else has his ensemble, his courage, and his character." This egotism may be called rather blunt, but the statement was, unquestionably, true.

He had the qualities that fitted him for public life. In a letter to Mauvillon, in his own characteristic style, referring to himself, he says: "Behold at last a Frenchman who is born with the soul, the head, and the character of a public man!"

Audacious, daring, imperious, he was a master among his fellows. In exigencies, his self-possession never deserted him, and in short debate he was invincible. Under attack and when aroused the whole force and vigor of his intellect came into play; the resources upon which he drew seemed to be almost inexhaustible, and he never rose to greater heights than when spurred by opposition. When assailed, and apparently discomfited, he returned to the attack with renewed vigor and astounded and dismayed his opponents by the logic and force of his argument. He had the faculty of clearly expressing the truth in a simple phrase and answering his adversary by a clever sally.

His knowledge of human nature was profound; his prescience was the vision of prophecy.

Impulsive and impetuous, he was yet controlled by a sound, an intelligent judgment.

As statesman, politician, author, orator, and lover, he was ever the same. He wooed a woman as he won a cause. His intellect, his heart, and sympathies were his only means in any contest. Such a man but needed an opportunity to become great, and the Revolution gave him that opportunity.

He was a born tribune of the people. Ever conscious of his strength, he inspired enthusiasm in his followers.

If he could have secured the confidence of the king and had been placed in the ministry, before he was suspected of venality, the Revolution might have avoided its excesses and have secured its reforms without destroying the monarchy.

To understand the character of such a man, we must take his life as a whole. We must judge him by considering his early education, associations, and surroundings, his opportunities, temptations, and struggles, as well as his natural faculties, temperament, and passions. That which is no temptation to one man, may require a bitter, an heroic struggle for another to resist. We must, too, bear in mind the morals and the sentiments of the age in which he lived. Without forgiving his vices, we may then find, at least, some excuse or extenuation for them.

The father of Mirabeau was a tyrant, and his example was most pernicious. Acrid, unforgiving in disposition, the marquis made the early years of his son's life most unhappy, most miserable.

Mirabeau saw his mother depart from her home charged with infidelity, and then saw his father put another woman in her place, a woman, too, who was the wife of another man. He had witnessed the daily, constant bickerings between his parents, who fought like wild-cats, and he had not the love of either; an impulsive, a spirited boy, whose character should have been most carefully moulded, had neither the care of a father nor the tender affection of a mother. He saw a younger brother caressed while he was pushed aside, and was disgraced by being compelled to bear a name other than his lawful title. He was induced, from the most sordid motives on the part of his father, to marry an heiress whom he did not and could not love. He had been taught to maintain the pride of a nobleman, and was compelled to live on an amount that was little more than the salary of a coachman. His wife, silly and homely, made him a cuckold, and for an offence that should have been reprimanded and forgiven, he was arrested under a *lettre de cachet*, obtained by his father, and thrown into a dungeon. Naturally affectionate and sympathetic, he had found no one, up to this time, to respond to his heart's desires. Is it a wonder that, under these wretched conditions, his morals became lax? The age in which he lived was sceptical, immoral, and vicious. Most of the young men in his class were roués and proud of their vices. The court, with the exception of the king, who had a reason for his virtue, was luxurious and voluptuous. The honor of women was held in low esteem; the example set

by the nobility, and even by many of the higher clergy, lowered the moral tone of the whole nation.

In view of all this, it is but fair to measure Mirabeau by a rule not too exacting. We must consider the early influences that controlled his life and the prevailing conditions of society if we desire to do him justice. He knew what his vices had cost France; he knew how much they lessened his influence, and time and again he bitterly repented, once remarking: "If I only had the virtues of Malesherbes, how useful I could be to my country!" To La Marck he said: "Oh! what harm the immorality of my youth does to the popular cause." Dumont says: "He was so fully aware that if he had enjoyed personal consideration, all France would have been at his feet, that there were moments when he would have consented to pass 'seven times through the heated furnace' to purify the name of Mirabeau. I have seen him weep with grief and heard him say, almost suffocated with sobs, 'I am cruelly expiating the errors of my youth.'" Only the man who has sinned knows how bitter is the agony of remorse.

His passions, his vices, were inherited; "his sins were only half his," one of his biographers has said. That the sins of the parents shall be visited upon the heads of the children unto the third and fourth generations never found a clearer exemplification of that natural law.

Gabriel was not the only one in the family who was tainted with heredity. In referring to his sister, Madame de Chabris, he said the most venial

of her vices was that she was a wanton. This may not have been a kindly remark for a brother to make, but it was not far from the truth. His brother, Barrel Mirabeau, so named because of his intemperance, was a coarse and vulgar debauchee, who was continually in his cups. When reproached by his elder brother for his habitual drunkenness, he answered: "It is the only vice you have left me." This was a weak excuse, for he had all the vices of his brother in addition to intemperance, and was without his brother's great talents and good traits.

Mirabeau's life, from his birth until his release from the castle of Vincennes, was almost one continual torture. His early training, his army experience, his unhappy marriage, the hatred of his father, his troubles resulting from the unfortunate seduction of Sophie Monnier, his struggles, poverty, and cruel, harrowing imprisonments, were enough to break the spirit of even a Mirabeau.

He was about thirty-two years of age when released from Vincennes, and he had but ten years of life remaining; and it was only in the period extending from May, 1789, to April, 1791, that he secured the theatre in which he was to play a leading role and prove himself one of the greatest men that France ever produced.

He had had no training at the bar, and yet he managed his case at Pontarlier with so consummate a skill that he baffled and defeated the ablest lawyers in Provence, and made one of the greatest arguments ever heard in the courts of France. And, strange to say, prior to this, he had never

attempted to try a case nor argue a cause, nor did he ever before have an opportunity to cultivate the art of forensic speaking.

When the States General was called, he threw himself with all the ardor of his nature into the canvass and he displayed superior ability as a shrewd politician and as a skilful campaign organizer. As an orator on the hustings, his fame spread throughout all France. To be sure, he had been familiar with public questions, for he had deluged the country with his pamphlets upon every current topic, and he had had some little experience in diplomacy, but as a practical politician and a public speaker, he never had any special training nor opportunity. He sprang into the arena, however, full armed when the tocsin of the Revolution sounded. In the Assembly he took a leading position from the very start.

He had studied the English Constitution and had familiarized himself with the features and the principles of the governments of many European states. He knew wherein the government of France was defective, and how great were the abuses. He could be fairly ranked in the class of statesmen before he entered the Assembly, but it is marvellous how he so suddenly acquired a power as an orator, so commanding,—never, so far as I can ascertain, making a public address of any character until he spoke in the Parliament of Provence, when he was thirty-two years of age, and never making a political speech until his campaign in Aix in 1788–89, less than three years before his death. Perhaps, as an orator, France

never produced his equal. He possessed an impassioned eloquence, an eloquence that was easily excited, and his manner at all times was most dramatic.

"His voice," says Dumont, "was full, manly, and sonorous; it filled and pleased the ear. Always powerful, yet flexible, it could be heard as distinctly when he lowered as when he raised it. He could go through all its notes with equal ease and distinctness, and he pronounced his finals with so much care that the last syllable was never lost."

"His oratory," says Madame de Staël, "had a power of life." Another writer says: "His eloquence, imperative as law, is only the gift of impassioned reasoning." "All his contemporaries," says Victor Hugo, "are unanimous on this point, —he was something magnificent." "It was by Mirabeau," says Brougham, "that the people were first made to feel the force of the orator; first taught what it was to hear spoken reason and spoken passion; and the silence of ages in those halls was first broken by the thunder of his voice echoing through the lofty vaults now covering multitudes of excited men."

Mirabeau did not disdain the artificial, for there was much of it about him, but when in the torrent and tempest of his passion he lost all self-consciousness, he then rose to the heights of sublime eloquence. His imagination was fertile, his fancy lively, his wit nimble, his perception clear, and his memory extensive. His fiery eloquence threw off his thoughts like sparks from an anvil. His sarcasm was cutting and he used it without economy.

His scorn was withering. In denunciation he was terrific, and his anger, when aroused, was consuming, and bore down all opposition before it. "Anger suited this man as the tempest does the ocean." When in heated debate he had the head of Medusa, and petrified his assailants. His eloquence was like his visage, rough-hewn but terrible.

His personal appearance had its advantages. "You know not," said he, "all the power of my ugliness; when I shake my terrible locks, no one dares interrupt me." "When he talked of confronting his opponents in the Assembly," says Walter Scott, "his favorite phrase was, 'I will show them La Hure,' that is the boar's head, meaning his own tusked and shaggy countenance."

"His ugliness was so great as almost to become proverbial, and features naturally harsh and even distorted were rendered still more repulsive by the deep furrows of the confluent smallpox. . . . The power of his eye, however, was undeniable, and the spirit and expression which his mind threw into all his countenance made it how plain soever anything rather than uninteresting or disgusting."

Such a man, when he mounted the tribune,—tall, broad-shouldered, with the neck of a bull, the mane of a lion, his head tossed back, his strong features lively, and animated in expression,—would at once command attention.

Dumont says "his ordinary manner of speaking was very slow. He began with the appearance of a little embarrassment, often hesitated but in a way to excite interest, and until he became ani-

mated, he seemed as if he were selecting the most agreeable expressions."

It is difficult to judge of the real merits of an orator of a past age. What would suit one period, might be out of fashion in another. Mirabeau was essentially the orator of a revolution. His earnest and impassioned eloquence was specially adapted to a convention swayed by emotions and controlled by excitement, in a time of great political convulsions. Mirabeau's inflammatory oratory would have been as much out of fashion in the English parliament of the time of Peel, as Peel's oratory would have been out of place in the National Assembly of France.

There is no one, of his period, in France, with whom we can compare him. The French Revolution was an age of eloquence, for the minds of men were afire, their enthusiasm was aflame, and the Assembly was filled with orators; but Mirabeau, in his lofty eagle-flights, soared far above them all. "As a political orator, Mirabeau was, in certain points, superior to all other men. No other orator did so much with a single word, nor hit the mark with so sure an aim. In the tribune he was immovable. He remained master of his temper even under the severest personal attacks."

Dumont says: "Mirabeau, as an orator, is below Demosthenes, Cicero, Pitt, and Fox." There is often a little envy lurking in the criticisms of Dumont, and perhaps a man is never great to his valet. But if these four great world-orators had to be chosen by Dumont as the only orators beneath whom Mirabeau stands, it is honor enough

for the proudest man. And yet it is a question whether or not any one of them could have exerted by his eloquence such an influence as Mirabeau did exert in the National Assembly.

Demosthenes, who is said to have had almost superhuman force, stands in a class by himself. It seems almost sacrilege to compare anybody with him. There must be one great master of the art to whom the world accords first honor. Demosthenes, in his class, like Angelo and Shakespeare in their respective classes, is far beyond all criticism, and is removed from the challenge of comparison. To say seriously that an orator is not so great as Demosthenes, is almost to admit that, with but one exception, he is the greatest.

Cicero's style was more polished, more scholarly, than Mirabeau's, but he was wanting in those personal qualities that made Mirabeau one of the greatest, one of the most impressive, of the world's popular orators. They are in different schools and cannot be compared, but not for the reason given in the case of Demosthenes. There may be the same difference between Cicero and Mirabeau that the ancients said there was between Demosthenes and Cicero. When Cicero finished speaking, every one exclaimed: "What a great orator!" When Demosthenes ceased, the people shouted: "Let us make war on Philip."

If Dumont refers to the younger Pitt, it is safe to say that his easy flowing, monotonous "state-paper style," without fire, would hardly have been heeded in the stormy debates of the Revolution. He did not, in any sense, possess the emotional

eloquence of the great tribune. He was an orator of the head alone, not of the heart.

Fox was perhaps stronger in logical reasoning than Mirabeau. In argument, especially in reply, the English orator was subtle and unanswerable. His voice was husky, his manner awkward, and his gestures graceless, but as he warmed to his theme, he became impassioned to such a degree that often his words choked his utterance. But he did not possess the tumultuous eloquence of Mirabeau, nor his impressive, dramatic manner. They had much in common in their lives. Fox was a spendthrift, a gambler, and wasted his nights in dissipation. His prodigality ran beyond all bounds, and, like Mirabeau, he burned the candle at both ends. They had many qualities in common.

Macaulay, in drawing a comparison between Mirabeau and Chatham, says: "His eloquence, so far as we can judge of it, bore no inconsiderable resemblance to that of the great English minister. He was not eminently successful in long set speeches. He was not, on the other hand, a close and ready debater. Sudden bursts, which seemed to be the effect of inspiration; short sentences, which came like lightning, dazzling, burning, striking down everything before them; sentences which, spoken at critical moments, decided the fate of great questions; sentences which at once became proverbs,—in these chiefly lay the oratorical power both of Chatham and of Mirabeau. There have been far greater speakers and far greater statesmen than either of them, but we doubt whether any men have, in modern times, exercised

such vast personal influence over stormy and divided assemblies."

In considering the qualities of Mirabeau, is it not closer to the truth to say that although he had the sudden bursts of inspiration, the withering, burning sentences that characterized the oratory of Chatham, he had to a more marked degree the power and eloquence of the "Great Agitator." Daniel O'Connell? The Irish orator was like Mirabeau, tall, broad-shouldered, herculean in frame. "His early sins and excesses had been royal in their extravagances." He thought and spoke in epigrams. His words came red-hot from his emotions. His soul was volcanic. Tumult and whirlwind and earthquake suited his temperament. He was dramatic in manner; he possessed declamatory energy and defiant courage. His voice, equal to every demand made upon it, was flexible and powerful, capable of expressing every emotion, and was terrible in denunciation. He was fearless, audacious, and ever conscious of his strength. Easily aroused by opposition, all his talents came into play at once. He was a born agitator, a revolutionist. He would have been a power in the National Assembly of France. He was equally at home on the hustings or in the Senate. He had, to a superlative degree, the qualities of a popular orator, and he declaimed, with all the ardor of his nature, against oppression and denounced injustice of every form.

In nicknames, Mirabeau was most happy. In two words he could describe a man in stronger light than could a page of labored detail. O'Con-

nell also had this faculty to a remarkable degree. Mirabeau called d'Espremenil, "Crispin-Catilina," and designated La Fayette, "Grandison-Cromwell." He accused the latter, because of his love of popularity, of desiring only "the glory of gazettes." These remind us of O'Connell's "Scorpion-Stanley" and "Spinning-Jenny Peel." In referring to the cold smile of the latter statesman, he said it was like "the silver plate on a coffin."

In many particulars, so far as the style or character of his oratory is concerned, the "Great Agitator" of Ireland resembled the "Great Tribune" of France, perhaps more closely than any of the English orators. It will, however, I am sure, be admitted without speaking invidiously, that Mirabeau had a much finer intellect than O'Connell, and far greater qualities as a statesman.

It is a difficult task to compare orators, for eloquence comes in so many different forms. Eloquence is not circumscribed by rules, nor does it depend upon the tone of voice, nor the grace of gesture. It may be like the sound of a trumpet or the screech of an owl. It is the earnest expression of emotion, it is the highest expression of sincerity, it is the heart's desire revealed in words. It persuades, convinces, fascinates. It may arouse the passions or allay them. It is in the vigorous, forceful style of a Demosthenes, or the graceful sentences of a Cicero; in the wild frenzy of a Peter the Hermit, or the polished diction of a Bossuet; in the screaming, stuttering utterances of a Desmoulins, or the impassioned, winged words of a Mirabeau. It may lie dormant in every soul, only

waiting to be awakened when a great truth is to be told or a cause defended.

The real eloquence of a speech is to be judged by the effect produced at the time of its delivery, and if this be the test, then Mirabeau must stand in the very front rank of the world's greatest orators.

Not only was Mirabeau great in the tribune, but his interruptions while in his seat or on the floor went straight to the point. M. Valfond charged him with running through the streets on the 6th of October, swinging a sabre and inciting the mob to riot. The testimony, however, pointed to M. Gamaches as the man who had waved the sabre. Mirabeau immediately remarked that "Gamaches must be an exceptionally ugly man in view of the fact that he was taken for me."

Upon one occasion the National Assembly proposed an address to the king in these words: "The Assembly brings to the feet of your Majesty an offering," etc. "Majesty has no feet," grumbled Mirabeau. At another time, the National Assembly, in an address, said: "It is intoxicated with the glory of its king." "Really," said Mirabeau, "people who make laws should not admit that they are intoxicated." "Dull as to-day's debate," cried a speaker. "Why specify to-day?—Pourquoi dater?"—responded Mirabeau.

"Speak not to me of your Duke of Savoy, a bad neighbor to all liberty," he growled, addressing the ministers. When some one suggested that La Fayette had his army, "Yes," spoke up Mirabeau, "but I have my head."

"The court is starving the people. Treason," he cried; "the people will sell it the constitution for bread."

On October 22, 1789, the king made an offer of his gold and silver plate to help relieve the wants of the people. The Right applauded such generosity on the part of his Majesty, and some members, in expressing their admiration, wept. "As for me," Mirabeau muttered, "I do not become tearful over the family plate of the great."

Mirabeau, when in his seat in the Assembly, was restless and deeply interested in all that was going on. He wrote and passed notes to fellow deputies, made points on the debates, applauded the speakers, for no one was more generous than he in recognizing merit; he was so big himself that it never occurred to him to be chary in his appreciation and recognition of real worth.

Upon one occasion, the Archbishop of Aix was so eloquently defending his order that he commanded the applause of even his opponents. Mirabeau most heartily applauded, but cried out that he could applaud his talent without adopting his opinions.

He had a contempt for mediocrity that was vain or boastful; he despised sham and he never hesitated to interrupt an orator who was simply "vaporizing."

As a writer, his works abound in thought, but the style is at times commonplace and confused. He appears to write as if thinking too fast for his pen, and the thought often seems only half expressed. His works have no labored polish, they

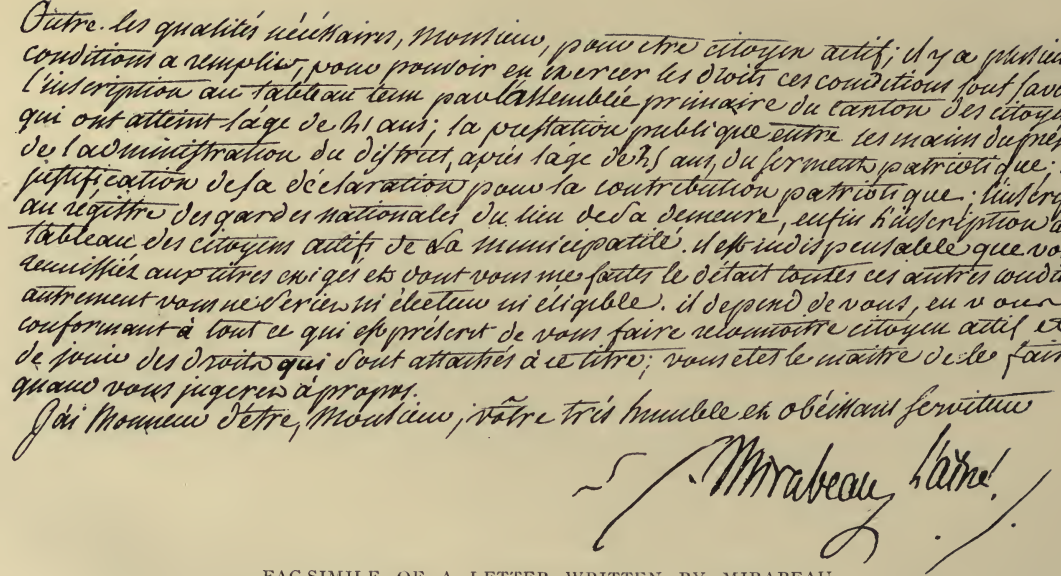
are rough-hewn; nor do they suggest, as a rule, any trace of careful revision. "His ideas are ever grand and lofty," says Victor Hugo, "but to get out of his brain, they have to stoop and shrink as if under a door too low."

At the beginning of the Revolution, he unquestionably stood high in the world of letters. Arthur Young, in referring to him, says: "In every company of every rank, you hear of the Count of Mirabeau's talents,—that he is one of the first pens of France."

He had written upon current topics of interest. He was a political writer, a pamphleteer; he wrote for the occasion. Hence, his writings have but little interest for the reader of to-day. In our times, he would have found his calling in journalism. There is nothing he wrote that would suggest his candidacy for admission to the French Academy, but we must remember in judging his work that he wrote to replenish his purse, or in the midst of political excitement, and only upon current questions. His work on the Bank of St. Charles, a book of three hundred pages, was written in eight days. To be sure, he borrowed much of his material from his friends, Claviere and Brissot, but he wrought the matter into shape and made it his own in a little more than a week.

Another point not to be lost sight of is the fact that his oratory was of so high an order that we are tempted, in judging one talent, to measure it by the standard of the other, and his literary work, necessarily, falls below his reputation as an orator.

The following letter to the king of Prussia is



FAC-SIMILE OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY MIRABEAU

The original is in the possession of William J. Latta, Esq.

full of practical, worldly, and political wisdom, and is a fair sample of his style. It is written with more than his usual care. It could safely and wisely be adopted as the text-book of kings:

"You have reached the throne at a fortunate period. The age is becoming daily more enlightened. It has labored for your benefit in collecting sound notions for you. It extends its influence over your nation, which so many circumstances have kept behind others. Everything is now tested by a severe logic. The men who see only a fellow-creature under the royal mantle, and require that he should possess some virtue, are more numerous than ever. Their suffrages cannot be dispensed with. In their opinion, one kind of glory alone remains, every other is exhausted. Military success, political talents, wonders in art, improvements in science, have all appeared in turn, and their light has blazed forth from one extremity of Europe to the other. That enlightened benevolence which gives form and life to empires has not yet appeared, pure and unmixed, upon a throne. To you it belongs to place it there,—this sublime glory is reserved for you. Your predecessor gained battles enough, perhaps too many; he has too much fatigued Fame's hundred tongues and exhausted military glory for several reigns,—nay, for several centuries. . . . With much greater facility, you may create a glory more pure and not less brilliant, which shall be wholly your own. Frederick conquered the admiration of mankind, but he never won their love. This love you may entirely possess.

"Do not, ah! do not neglect the treasure which

Providence has spread in your path. Deserve the blessings of the poor, the love of your people, the respect of Europe, and the good wishes of wise men. Be just, be good, and you will be great and happy.

"You wish to obtain, dread sir, the title of Great, but you wish to receive it from the mouth of history and from the suffrage of ages to come,—you would despise it from the mouths of your courtiers. If you do that which the son of your slave could do ten times a day better than yourself they will tell you that you have performed an extraordinary action! If you suffer your passions to mislead you, they will say that you are right! If you are as lavish of the blood of your subjects as of the waters of your rivers, again will they tell you that you are right! If you barter for gold the air that preserves life, they will say that you are right! If you revenge yourself,—you who are so powerful,—they will continue to tell you that you are right! . . . They said the same thing when Alexander, in a drunken fit, plunged his dagger into the bosom of his friend; they said the same thing when Nero murdered his mother. . . .

"If you indefatigably perform your duties, without putting off till the following day the burden of the present day; if by great and fruitful principles you can simplify these duties and reduce them within the capacity of a single man; if you give your subjects all the freedom they can bear; if you can protect every kind of property and facilitate useful labor; if you terrify petty oppressors, who, in your name, would prevent men from

doing, for their own advantage, that which injures not their fellows,—a unanimous shout will bless your authority and render it more sacred and more powerful. Everything will then be easy for you, because the will and the strength of all will be united to your own strength and your own will, and your labor will become every day less severe. Nature has made labor necessary to man. It gives him also this precious advantage, that change of labor is to him not only a relaxation, but a source of pleasure. Who, more easily than a king, can live in strict accordance with this order of nature? A philosopher has said 'no man feels such lassitude of spirit as a king.' He should have said, 'a slothful king.' How could lassitude of mind fall upon a sovereign who did his duty? Could he ever keep up his vigor of intellect and preserve his health so well as by shielding himself, under the pursuit of labor, from the disgust which every man of sense must feel among those idle talkers, those inventors of fulsome praises, who study their prince for no other purpose than to corrupt, blind, and rob him? Their sole art is to render him indifferent and feeble, or else impatient, rude, and idle. . . . Your subjects will enjoy your virtues, which alone can preserve and improve their patrimony. Your courtiers will cultivate your defects, by which alone they can support their influence and their expectations. . . . It is worthy of you not to govern too much. . . .

"I recommend the immediate abolition of military slavery, that is to say, the obligation imposed upon every Prussian to serve as a soldier from

the age of eighteen years to sixty and more; that dreadful law arising from the necessities of an iron age and a semi-barbarous country; that law dishonoring a nation without whom your ancestors would have been nothing but slaves, more or less decorated with empty honors. This law does not produce you a single soldier more than you would obtain by a wiser system, which may enable you to recruit the Prussian army in a manner that shall elevate men's hearts, add to the public spirit, and possess the forms of freedom, instead of those of brutishness and slavery. Throughout Europe, more especially in your Majesty's dominions, one of the most useful instincts upon which patriotism could be founded is stupidly lost. Men are forced to go to the battle-field like cattle to the slaughter-house; whilst nothing is easier than to make the public service an object of emulation and glory.

"Be also the first sovereign in whose dominions every man, willing to work, shall find employment. Everything that breathes must obtain its nourishment by labor. This is the first law of nature, anterior to all human convention; it is the connecting bond of all society, for every man who finds nothing but a refusal to his offer to work in exchange for his subsistence, becomes the natural and lawful enemy of other men and has a right to private war against society. In the country, as in cities, let workshops be everywhere opened at your Majesty's cost; let all men, of what nation soever, find their maintenance in the price of their labor; let your subjects there learn the value of

time and activity. Instruction, you are aware, is one of the most important of a sovereign's duties, and, likewise, one of his richest treasures. Entire liberty of the press ought to be one of your first acts, not only because any restraint upon this liberty is a hindrance to the employment of natural rights, but because every obstacle to the advancement of knowledge is an evil, a great evil, especially for you who are debarred thereby from obtaining, through the medium of printing, a knowledge of the truth and of public opinion,—that prime minister of good kings.

"Let information be circulated through your dominions. Read and let others read. If light were rising on all sides towards the throne, would you invoke darkness? Oh, no; for it would be in vain. You would lose too much, without even obtaining the fatal success of extinguishing it. You will read, you will begin a noble association with books. They have destroyed cruel and disgraceful prejudices, they have smoothed the road before you, they have served you even before you were born. You will not be ungrateful towards the accumulated works of beneficent genius.

"You will read and protect those who write; for without them what becomes of the human species, and what would it be? They will instruct, they will assist, they will talk to you without seeing you. Without approaching your throne, they will introduce there the august truth. This truth will enter your palace alone, without escort and without affected dignity; it will bear neither title nor ribands, but will be invisible and disinterested.

"You will read, but you will be desirous that your subjects should also read. You will not think you have done all by recruiting your academies from foreign countries: you will found schools, you will multiply them, especially in country places, and you will endow them. You would not reign in darkness, and you will say, 'Let there be light!' The light will burst forth at your voice; and its halo, playing round your brow, will form a more glorious ornament than all the laurels won by conquerors. . . .

"I trust, dread sir, that my candor will not displease you. Meditate on these respectful lines and say: This is what will never be admitted to me as true, and is the very reverse of what I shall be told every day. The boldest offer to kings nothing but veiled truths, whilst here I see truth quite naked. . . . This is far preferable to that venal incense with which I am suffocated by versifiers and panegyrists of the Academy, who seized upon me in my cradle and will scarcely leave me when I am in my coffin. I am a man before I am a king. Why should I be offended at being treated as a man? Why should I be offended with a foreigner, who wants nothing of me, and will soon quit my court never more to see me, for speaking to me without disguise? He points out to me that which his eyes, his experience, his studies, and his understanding have collected; he gives me, without expectation of reward, those true and free counsels of which no condition of man is so much in want as kings. He has no interest in deceiving me, and can have none but good intentions. . . . Let

me examine attentively what he proposes; for the mere common sense and the candor of a man who has no other pursuit than the cultivation of his reason and his intellect, may, perhaps, be as good as the old routine and trickery and forms and diplomatic illusions and the ridiculous dogmas of statesmen by profession."

Mirabeau possessed the talents that would have enabled him to secure a high position among the literary characters of his country, but he had not the opportunity, nor perhaps had he the inclination, to retire from the excitements of the world to devote himself to an extended work. He wrote for an immediate purpose, to accomplish an immediate result, and generally wrote under the inspiration or the necessities of the moment.

Lord Brougham, in commenting on the literary ability of Mirabeau, writes: "*The Essai sur le Despotisme*, his earliest political production, is a work of extraordinary merit; and the *Considerations sur l'Agiotage*, and the essay on *Lettres de Cachet*, may probably be esteemed his best tracts. But we are here speaking of those writings which partake not of the oratorical character; for to estimate his genius we must look at the sudden and occasional productions of his pen which resemble speeches more than books, and which, indeed, though never spoken, belong far more to the rhetorical than the literary or scientific class of writings. Among these the celebrated *Réponse aux Protestations des Possedant Fiefs*, published in February, 1788, and written, as it were, offhand, justly deserves the highest place; and it

would be difficult to match it in the history of French eloquence."

As a statesman, he stood unrivalled in all France, in his day and generation. He was well informed on current public questions and familiar with the forms, the theories, and the principles of government. He had a constructive intellect and was a good administrator. He had the qualities that go to make a successful politician. He had a genius for politics, for public life. He had a marked capacity for detail and possessed great organizing and executive ability. He had those shining, brilliant talents that win popularity, and that power that inspires confidence. He had a profound knowledge of human nature. He was a good judge of men and could fathom the motives that controlled them. He could soon discover their weak points and knew how to reach them through their vanity, greed, or ambitions. He was not particular in his choice of means in obtaining his ends. He was crafty and unscrupulous in political negotiations. He was, however, not always tactful, for, at times, he was too outspoken in his denunciation of men. His criticisms, though accurate, were frequently very severe, and he often made enemies where he might have made friends.

He was intensely patriotic,—he loved France devotedly. He was always a monarchist; although a revolutionist, he was not a republican. If it had been in his power he would have created and strongly established upon an enduring foundation of justice and humanity a government in which the people would have enjoyed liberty, and whose

ruler, a king, would have been restrained in the exercise of his authority by constitutional limitations. Mirabeau had risked all in his desire and efforts to destroy tyranny, to correct abuses, to abolish privileges, to equalize taxes, to define duties, to secure rights, and to promote the welfare of the common people. He boldly encouraged revolution until revolution accomplished its purpose, which purpose was the liberty of the people, —not the destruction of the state, but its preservation under the forms of law. He died at a time when the people, escaping from despotism, were beginning to taste the sweets of liberty and to think only of avenging past wrongs. Not accustomed to freedom, nor appreciating its uses and blessings, they ran into the most violent excesses. They mistook liberty for license. All restraint appeared to them to have the semblance of tyranny. So long had they suffered under a system of rapine and fraud that when the restraints were removed they went too far in the other direction, which conduct, under all the circumstances, was natural, and, in view of what they had endured, we may say, was almost excusable. Had Mirabeau lived he would have done all in his power to secure peace and order, and to apply to government those principles he had so ably and so bravely advocated.

The religious opinions of Mirabeau are not hard to define. He, no doubt, if we may judge from his speeches, had respect for religion as an institution, but it is very certain he had no faith in its creeds. It is said that he at one time did

express a belief in the immortality of the soul. He was unquestionably influenced by the philosophic tendencies of the age. His remark on his death-bed, when looking at the sun, that "if it be not God, it is His cousin-german," may rank him among the deists or the materialists, but there is no reason to enroll him as a Christian, for he gave no sign of his faith. He died like a Roman stoic. Death to him was sleep, eternal sleep. Mirabeau, however, was always tolerant in his views on religion.

He was an enemy to injustice and tyranny. He bitterly opposed the African slave trade, and in a most eloquent letter to Wilberforce, written in April, 1790, he clearly expresses his views on the subject: "I had formed for a long time, Monsieur, the intention of addressing you with the confidence which two sincere friends of liberty owe to each other; but an accident having temporarily deprived me of the use of my eyes, I have been compelled to postpone from day to day the overture, which the invaluable services you have rendered to the cause of the negro have encouraged me to make. . . .

"I know the resistance, and even the machinations, which the rage of the planters will excite against my motion and against me individually. I know also that I shall incur the censure of many honest men in whom the deceptions of interest blind humanity. Beyond all this, however, I have but one fear and that is the influence of that despicable argument,—if we abolish the slave trade, the English will profit thereby. In vain shall

I tell them that if I were influenced by those prejudices between nations which have caused the invention of the odious expression, natural enemies, I could not desire for England a privilege more fatally exclusive than that of the traffic in negroes. In vain shall I demonstrate to them that the system of reciprocity is absurd on its face, because, according to the principle thereof, no one should trade save with himself.

"Unhappily, enlightenment has not yet sufficiently advanced to allow a universal prejudice to be combated by the unaided force of reason, and I shall lose the greater portion of the well-intentioned members of the Assembly if I fail to convince them that England will follow our example, or rather concur in the execution of our law, the day that we abolish the infamous practice."

After referring to the position taken by Mr. Pitt on the question, the letter continues: "You are the friend of Mr. Pitt and that is not one of the least rewards of his life. I have not the honor of knowing you personally, but you are, if I may so speak, the author of the revolution relative to the African slave trade I would accomplish in France.

"The indefatigable constancy of your labors, the efforts and the sacrifices you have made in this cause, are the guarantees of your sentiments and of your principles. I believe in virtue, Monsieur, and I believe beyond everything in yours.

"I hope that a man who can have no interest in this beyond the mere good he would fain accomplish, and who for so many years has been known

by his passion for liberty, by his perseverance in opposition to oppression; I hope, I say, that that man will inspire you with some confidence. All he asks is that you should be useful to the pious end which seems your first ambition. Deign to secure from Mr. Pitt some assurance that you may give me, not for myself, but for my allies, and kindly tell me to what extent I may use it. I shall be most punctilious, even religious, in the observation of whatever shall be prescribed me.

"I offer also, Monsieur, to submit to you the project of the law I intend to propose to the National Assembly. Independent of the observations your experience and wisdom could enrich me with, you will find me ready to adapt my plan to your localities, whether in the New World or in Africa, in order to make a law corresponding with yours.

"To conclude, there is nothing which the beneficent Wilberforce has not a right to expect from my deference, from my zeal, and from the respect wherewith I remain, Yours, etc."

This letter was never answered by Wilberforce. The explanation for the silence is that Mirabeau, having asked that some assurance be given as to Pitt's sincerity in his advocacy of the abolition of the slave trade, rendered it impossible for Wilberforce to reply.

After sending this letter, Mirabeau prepared with great care an oration on the Slave Trade, but, unfortunately, never had an opportunity to deliver it. It is singularly bold and most eloquent.

"I am now undertaking," he wrote, "to plead

before you the cause of a race of men who, endowed with a fatal pre-eminence among the unfortunate, live, suffer, and die slaves of the most detestable tyranny of which history has transmitted us accounts. You already know that I speak of the slaves of America.

"I will neither degrade this Assembly nor myself by seeking to prove that the negroes have a right to their liberty. You have already decided that question, because you have declared that all men are born and die equal and free in respect to their rights, and it is not on this side of the Atlantic that corrupted sophists will dare to assert that the negroes are not men."

Utterances so vigorous in denunciation of slavery were not heard even in America at that early date. In answer to the statement that the slave trade is not an inhuman commerce, he grows warm in his wrath, and his eloquence is vivid as he describes its inhumanity. "Count for nothing the desolations, the incendiaries, the pillages to which it is necessary to devote the African coast in order to obtain the poor creatures at all. Count for nothing those who, during the voyage, die or perish in the agony of despair."

He describes the vessel, that "long floating bier," as it rolls and lurches on the stormy waves of the sea; he pictures the wretches in the ship's hold, crowding one against the other, the chains galling and tearing their flesh and limbs. Imagine, too, what manner of voyage that is of two thousand, often three thousand, leagues. Insensate cupidity has so crowded the space between decks

that there is no room for passage, and it is necessary to tread under foot the bodies of the living victims in order to remove the dead and the dying. "The poor wretches! I see them, I hear them gasping for breath! Their parched and protruded tongues paint their anguish and cannot further express it. How they gather around the grates, how they endeavor to catch a breath of air, even a ray of light, in the vain hope of cheering and cooling themselves, if only for a moment! The horrible dungeon, as it moves, depopulates itself more and more day by day; room is given to the victims only by the death of half the captives. The most revolting plagues accumulating one upon another, frustrate, by their ravages, the avarice of the dealers in human flesh and blood." How like a flame of fire such an orator would have gone through America in ante-bellum days! How his eloquence would have scorched, would have burned, the conscience of the nation!

CHAPTER XXVIII

MIRABEAU'S VICES AND VIRTUES—MANNER OF DRESS — HIS EXTRAVAGANCE — HIS VANITY — COULD HE HAVE SAVED THE MONARCHY?— CONCLUSION

MIRABEAU was a remarkable character, as extraordinary in his vices as in his virtues. There is no need to throw a veil over his crimes, they stand out so prominently that they cannot be hidden. He seems, at times, to be half man, half satyr; "but the Cæsars, the Mirabeaus, the Napoleons, seldom obey the morals of the porch or the creeds of the cloister." If he had possessed, as he wished, the virtues of Malesherbes, he would not have been a Mirabeau. Gouverneur Morris wrote: "Vices both degrading and detestable marked this extraordinary creature,—venal, shameless, and yet greatly virtuous when pushed by a prevailing impulse." Another writer says: "When the state of affairs was urgent, the vicious and corrupt politician instantly disappeared, the god of eloquence took possession of him, his native land acted by him, and thundered by his voice." Romilly, an English gentleman of culture and of eminent respectability, had for Mirabeau the highest regard. The Count de la Marck was closely attached to him, and between them there existed the warmest kind of friendship. La Marck, in referring to his friend, said that "the Count of Mirabeau had

great faults in common with many other men, but we rarely find qualities so great and so noble united in one individual. . . . It is only after continuous and intimate intercourse with such a man that it is possible to realize of what elevated thoughts and of what deep affections we are capable."

"I never knew a man," said Dumont, "who, when he chose, could make himself so agreeable. He was a delightful companion in every sense of the word,—obliging, attentive, full of spirit, and possessed of great powers of mind and imagination. It was impossible to maintain reserve with him; you were forced into familiarity, obliged to forego etiquette and the ordinary forms of society, and call him simply by his name."

He charmed Camille Desmoulins, and fascinated Danton. In fact, it seemed impossible to come under the wand of the magician without being impressed and won. He was a monster only to those who did not know him.

He was most forgiving in disposition and nursed no resentments. He was constantly assailed by the orators of the Assembly on the Left as well as on the Right. He was called a "scoundrel," a "rascal," an "assassin," an "enemy of peace," a "monstrous babbler," a "shabby fellow." Vile epithets were hurled at him in debate. His rising to speak was nearly always the signal for a storm. Outside of the Assembly, the journals and the pamphlets tore him to pieces. M. de Champcenetz said that "he had the smallpox in his soul." It was suggested by M. de Lambesc that "twenty horse-

men should take him to the galleys." Marat appealed to the citizens "to raise eight hundred gibbets, hang all the traitors on them, and at their head the infamous Riquetti, the elder." Mirabeau took these insults with composure; he was in no sense vindictive. When it was proposed in the Assembly to prosecute Marat, he refused to consent, simply saying, "There seems to be a great deal of extravagant nonsense published. The man who wrote that must have been drunk." But, notwithstanding the many bitter attacks made upon him by his enemies, "the people which is not envious because it is great; the people which knows men, although itself a child,—the people was for Mirabeau."

He was greatly beloved by his servants. Dumont says they were much attached to him. Upon the occasion of the visit of Mirabeau to the Bastile after its capture, one of his servants who accompanied him was told to wait outside while Mirabeau went on a tour of inspection into some of the gloomy dungeons. "The poor fellow burst into tears and conjured me," says Dumont, "to keep an eye upon his master" lest some dreadful catastrophe might befall him in that hated prison. "The idea of the Bastile was associated in the minds of the people with the most sinister ideas, and the dead body of the monster still threw them into an agony of fear."

Mirabeau had a *valet de chambre* named Teutch who was devoted to him. He had been a smuggler, and was a man of extraordinary courage. Mirabeau, sometimes impatient or in an irritable

mood, would kick and thump his valet, "who considered these rough caresses as marks of friendship," and would grow sad and melancholy if he were long neglected in the matter of these attentions. "The despair of this man at Mirabeau's death was inconceivable."

Mirabeau's taste in dress was somewhat vulgar; its style was what we would call to-day "flashy," but he gave it particular attention. "He was," says Dumont, "very *recherche* in his toilet."

His friend De la Marck, in describing him, says: "He was tall, but at the same time stout and heavily built. His unusually large head was made to appear larger by a mass of curled and powdered hair. His coat buttons were of some brightly colored stone, and the buckles of his shoes enormous. His dress was an exaggeration of the fashion of the day and in bad taste. In his eagerness to be polite, he made absurdly low bows and began the conversation with pretentious and rather vulgar compliments. His manner wanted the ease of good society, and this awkwardness was most conspicuous when he addressed the ladies. It was only when the conversation turned upon politics that his eloquence poured forth and his brilliant ideas fascinated his audience."

It must be borne in mind, in this connection, that the foregoing description was given by a man of the most dignified bearing and accustomed to the etiquette and ceremonials of the most polite courts of Europe.

Mirabeau's exaggerations may have been out of form according to the rules of etiquette of a cold

and polished court, but in the exciting and noisy sessions of a revolutionary Assembly they found their usefulness.

To convey a further idea of his manner, the following description by Lord Minto, who had taken Mirabeau to visit his family at Bath, will fully answer the purpose. He says that "Mirabeau frightened his sister-in-law by his vehement, and, as he imagined, irresistible attentions; engrossed his host from morning to night; wore out Lady Elliot's patience by his constant and self-satisfied loquacity; terrified her little boy by his caresses, and, in fact, made himself so unendurable in a fortnight that she insisted that if he visited Minto he must lodge with the game-keeper."

He was essentially a man of the world, a high-liver. He loved the pleasures of the table, but he was a gourmet rather than a gourmand. He was not intemperate in drinking.

His prodigality was on a magnificent scale. He had no appreciation of the value of money. If he had only a franc, he spent it like a king, or if he had a fortune, he squandered it like a beggar. He was as generous as a Timon.

He was fond of music and loved flowers. He spent his Sundays in his gardens at Argenteuil and enjoyed the calm of rural solitude.

His vanity and egotism were inordinate. It is, perhaps, impossible that a Mirabeau should not know his power and feel his superiority. Egotism and conceit are contemptible in a weakling, but they are mere incidents in the character of a Mirabeau. "He was fond of standing before a large

pier glass," says Dumont, "to see himself speak, squaring his shoulders and throwing back his head. He had also the manner of vain men who are fond of hearing the sound of their own name and derive pleasure from pronouncing it themselves. Thus, he would suppose dialogues and introduce himself as one of the speakers; as, for instance, 'The Count de Mirabeau will answer that."

The question as to whether or not Mirabeau, if he had lived, could have delayed, changed, or directed the course of the Revolution, has been by many authors most curiously considered. There is no stronger proof of the belief in the greatness of Mirabeau than that it is a mooted question whether or not, if he had lived, he could have saved the monarchy. The fact that the question is considered by thoughtful men shows how great is the world's estimate of the power of Mirabeau. Over no other leader of the Revolution could such a controversy rage. It is one of the highest tributes that can be paid to the talents, the intellect, the genius of the man.

One writer positively asserts that "had his life been spared there is no doubt that the French Revolution would have taken another direction, and the horrible excesses of the Reign of Terror never have blackened the page of French regeneration. His death was the knell of the French monarchy; the glory of a long line of kings was buried in the grave of Mirabeau."

"If he had lived," says Dumont, "he might have held the Jacobins in check, even if he had not crushed them. . . . Mirabeau is the only man of

whom it might be said that if he had lived the destiny of France would have taken a different course."

Lord Brougham believed Mirabeau had reached that point in the Revolution when it would have been impossible for him to carry out the proposed plans for the restoration of the monarchy; that his venality was known to the people; and that any attempt on his part to stay the Revolution would have marked him as a traitor to the popular cause and would have brought down upon his head the execrations of a deceived people.

Sir Walter Scott believed that Mirabeau would have had to change the course of the Revolution in a short time, in view of his suspected bargain with the court, or pay the penalty of treason,—a victim to the vengeance of an infuriated people, to the vengeance of the very people who had followed him to the grave with sorrow and lamentations.

Another writer, Willert, declares: "Had Mirabeau never existed, the French Revolution would probably have run the same course; had his life been protracted, the event would have been the same, the ruin of the monarchy not less tragic and complete."

"Not the least of Mirabeau's talents," wrote a Parisian journalist on the day of his funeral, "was the gift of doing everything in season. He has given proof of this at last; he could not have chosen a better time to die."

Hazlitt and Von Holst are of opinion that he died just in the nick of time to save his popularity.

Victor Hugo says: "He died at the right mo-

ment. His was a sovereign and sublime head; '91 crowned it; '93 would have cut it off."

Hilaire Beloc writes: "Would he have saved, re-created, and restored that declining power which had once been the framework of the nation? We cannot tell. Had he lived, '92 would have shown us."

These are all surmises or guesses, of course. No one can, with any certainty, tell what would have happened had Mirabeau lived, but it is really an interesting question to discuss. It must be remembered in the discussion, however, that the Revolution was not the work of one man, it was the result of causes, of centuries of causes, of deep-seated wrongs, and it is not reasonable to suppose that any one man alone could have controlled, directed, or diverted its course. But there was a time when, if Mirabeau had been properly supported, his plans could have saved the throne.

Mirabeau had proposed plan after plan to the king, but every one had been rejected. Mistrust, timidity, and indecision stood in the way of concerted action. The queen feared him and the king failed him. He had to fight his battle alone, single-handed. He had tried to form an alliance with Necker, La Fayette, and Bailly, but without avail; he had consulted with Monsieur and Montmorin, but with no favorable, nor even definite, result. He had courted the Duke of Orleans, but that contemptible creature proved too weak for any purpose. He had even made overtures to Bouillé.

Mirabeau had never formed a party, and had no party back of him, nor was he at the head of any

faction; he was too independent in spirit to be a mere party man, and too broad to be a factionist. His popularity apparently had not diminished, but that is a very weak staff to lean upon, and the moment his conduct induced the people to believe that he was serving the court in return for the pension conferred, he would have fallen under public censure, and the days were coming when the distance was to be short between the mob's censure and the scaffold.

To save the monarchy would have required more than intrigue,—it would have required force, not only of intellect, but of arms.

After all, perhaps, it is really not a question whether Mirabeau could have saved the monarchy, but rather a question whether Louis would have let him. If any one of Mirabeau's plans had been adopted, the throne could have been saved long before his death, but every day that was lost in vacillation made the matter more difficult of solution. There is hardly an instance in all history where indecision was directly responsible for so great a loss.

Mirabeau had believed in Revolution for the sake of regenerating France, and when he saw the throne tottering, he fain would have saved it, but it is a grave question whether or not, at the period of his death, his cry to "Halt!" could have been heard above the noise of the tumult and confusion that he himself had helped to create. Perhaps no human power at that time could have stayed the Revolution, or even directed it into a peaceful channel. It may have been too late to check

its course. The many pygmies might have pulled the giant down if he had attempted to restore the throne. Had he lived, however, and gone to the scaffold he would have met his fate like a hero, —like the rest of those men of that eventful period whose dauntless courage in the face of death was exalted, was sublime. Patrician and plebeian met their doom without flinching,—in fact, practised the amenities of life on the platform of the guillotine and had the coolness of mind and the loftiness of soul to be polite and thoughtful of others even on the verge of eternity. Of all of them none went to his death more gloriously than Mirabeau would have gone.

At the time of Mirabeau's death, the revolutionary spirit was increasing as well as an opposition to the monarchy. The Jacobins were becoming more violent in their radicalism, and republicans were growing in numbers and influence. The unrestrained license of the journals was sowing in every direction the seeds of anarchy, and the ravings of the demagogues in the clubs, in the faubourgs, and at the Palais Royal, were daily arousing the bitter passions of the mob; even the discipline of the National Guard was gradually becoming demoralized. Perhaps conditions were at such a pass that they were beyond all human control.

On the other hand, it may be contended that the immense popularity of Mirabeau was so firmly established, his eloquence so overpowering, his energy so prodigious, his resources were so vast, that if he had received the proper support, he might

still have saved the throne and have prevented the excesses of the Reign of Terror.

Robespierre and the little men who came into power after the death of Mirabeau might have been kept in awe and subjection, or if worse had to come, civil war could have been resorted to and the king could have fought for his crown and throne, which, because of his indecision and procrastination, he lost, together with his life, without a struggle.

Had Mirabeau lived, he might have saved the people from themselves. "That criminal faction that trembled before him had no longer a bridle" to restrain them.

If Mirabeau, however, could not have succeeded in saving the monarchy, no man,—no, not twenty men,—in all France could have accomplished it. It was not his fault that he had failed, it was the fault of Louis and his friends.

"When Mirabeau was dead, all the ulterior anarchic projects broke loose." After his death, the Revolution was directed by "impotent and perverse men," who, when the Titan was overthrown, rose into prominence and importance. They had been overshadowed by the master, but now they sneaked out of their obscurity and, gazing round, not finding aught else to do, laid their hands on destruction. The fate of the monarchy was sealed. The empire of the Bourbons was doomed; "its ruins," as Mirabeau predicted, "soon became the prey of the factions;" the lion was dead and the jackals crept out of their caves to snarl and snap and fight over its decaying carcass.

There were some men who essayed to take the place of Mirabeau, but they signally failed. Watson says they tried to wear his mantle, but they were smothered in it.

There were many men able to destroy the throne, but not one now in all France able to save it. The power and the influence of the great tribune were gone. His death left a gap that was never filled.

The Revolution swept on its way resistless, engulfing in its vortex crown, throne, law, and order, and evolving in its own time, out of its excesses, that peace which results from the exhaustion of passion and violence, and, at last, it succeeded in establishing upon the ruins of the monarchy and the chaos of anarchy a proud and dauntless empire with its own plebeian king.

The Revolution effected a great reformation in political conditions throughout the civilized world. Its terrible excesses were temporary, its benefits were lasting, were durable. The privileged classes had endeavored to prevent it; all Europe made a combined effort to subdue it, but it was irresistible, so long as its enthusiasm continued. The power that had created and controlled it was the only power that could halt its excesses. It was from within, not from without, that the Revolution was stayed.

The history of the first two years of the Revolution is the history of Mirabeau. We may show that, in the early sessions of the Assembly, he was not listened to; that many of his measures were unsuccessful; but the spirit of the man dominated,

nevertheless, the whole convention; he was the centre around which the storm raged.

He was predestined. Nature endowed him with greatness of mind and, at the same time, planted in his body the germs of its dissolution. It was a struggle of the mental and the physical; with him it was a constant conflict between mind and matter, between right and wrong. "In a word, he was a colossus in every respect and there was in him a great deal of good, and a great deal of evil." His virtues and his vices fed upon each other. His intellect and passions were abnormal; they had to be to form such a creature. Energy was his passion; his passion was energy. Judged by the standard of other times, he was a monster, but in his own day he was the reformer of political abuses. His life was in defiance of every moral law, and yet he became the support of authority and order in government. "He is," writes Von Holst, "a genuine son of his times. Not only their characteristic, brilliant traits, but their follies and vices, have in him a pre-eminent representative."

Against all obstacles, he rose to the height of power, but his reputation, in a great measure, destroyed his usefulness. If his moral qualities had been such as to have inspired confidence, he could have accomplished anything. "Impossible!" he cried; "say not that beast of a word to me."

His vices, shameful as they were, are almost forgotten in our admiration of those marvelous faculties, that god-like power, that made him one of the greatest of the world's great men. "Moralities not a few," writes McCarthy, "may shriek out

against him—did shriek out against him in his day—have shrieked out against him since. But what is memorable in Mirabeau is the work he dreamed and the work he did; not his paganism, but his patriotism; not the nights he gave to his dancing women, but the days he gave to France."

"Only two things loved him," says Victor Hugo, "a mistress and a revolution; for the one, he broke all domestic ties, for the other, all social bonds."

He was not the Revolution, for he was a man,—that was an event. But he was its manifestation, its incarnation, while he lived.

He was the orator of a storm and stress period. He was the wild sea-bird that heralded the storm and, when it broke, he uttered its wild cry.

He was eloquent because he had suffered. Exiled, hunted, bastiled, tortured, starved,—he had become familiar with every phase of human pain and anguish. He had felt the pangs of poverty, the galling of the prison chain; he had languished in the fetid dampness of the dungeon, and had been oppressed by the tyranny of parent and state. A spirit less courageous than his would have been broken. His sufferings soured him against injustice, but not against mankind. He was ever cheerful, ever hopeful. He opposed tyranny in its every form. His voice was ever eloquent in advocacy of the liberty of man.

His courage was boundless,—he knew not the sense of fear. "The sight of the scaffold opposite my window," he exclaimed, "would not induce me to accept propositions in prison." Obstacles that

would have made other men despair gave him new courage. He strode the earth like a giant,—he exerted the strength of a giant, and, at last, this Hercules reeled and plunged to his death, carrying with him the last support, the last hope of the monarchy.

The world to-day recognizes his greatness, and time will only add to its bulk and stature. The perspective brings out into bolder relief those great virtues that, in his lifetime, were assailed by envy or overshadowed by his vices.

He helped in the regeneration of France and in securing to mankind liberty under constitutional forms.

His ashes having been buried with pomp and ceremony, with the honor and the reverence of a grateful people, were afterwards exhumed and scattered to the winds, but the fame of the great tribune is embalmed forever in the memory of men,—the world's greatest Pantheon for its heroes!

INDEX

A

Abolition of privileges on August 4, 287
Abrantes, Duchess d', 334
Absenteeism, 38
Æschines, 302
Affair of Nancy, 385
Aiguillon, Duke d', 405
Aix, 195, 203
Albigenses, 21
American Revolution, 94; its effects in France, 94; compared with French Revolution, 99
Angelo, 432
Angély, Regnault de St. Jean d', 306
Aremberg, Louis d', 337
Argenteau, Count Mercy d', 338, 339, 356
Argenteuil, 457
Army, The, 39
Artois, Count d', 246, 277, 278
Assignats, 368
Auch, Martin d', the only deputy of Third Estate to enter protest against Tennis-Court oath, 248
August 4, 1789, 376
Aumont, Duke d', 268

B

Bacon, 104
Bailly, 121, 242, 247, 248, 250, 253, 258, 308, 328, 343, 361, 460
Banquet of the Guards, 311
Barbier, Advocate, believes one should not concern one's self with state affairs, 24; says Paris is Jansenist from top to bottom, 33
Barnave, 121, 207, 405, 422

Bastile, attack on the, 270; its capture, 271; 376, 455
Beaumarchais, 76, 100; his comedies, "The Barber of Seville" and "The Marriage of Figaro," 101, 102, 103
Becket, Thomas a', 20
Beloc, Hilaire, 460
Bethune, Duke of, 51
Blanc, Louis, 307
Blin, 330, 331
Bolingbroke on Louis XIV., 61
Bouillé, 344, 460
Bourrienne, 244, 392
Breteuil made minister, 259; 274, 277
Brienne, Lomenie de, named minister, 112; resigns, 113
Brink, Jan Ten, on character of Robespierre, 233
Broglie, General de, given command of the troops at Versailles, 259; 274, 277
Broglie, Madame, 207
Brougham, Lord, 429, 445, 459
Buffiere, Pierre, name of Mirabeau while at Choquard's Academy, 152
Bull of Pope Pius V., 23
Burke, Edmund, description of Marie Antoinette, 84; his friendship claimed by Anacharsis Clootz, 377
Buzot, 121

C

Cabanis, 410, 412, 419
"Ça ira! Ça ira!" 380
Calonne appointed minister, 108; called "the enchanter," "the model financier," "the ladies' minister," 108; his maxim, 109; the deficit, 109; asks Parliament of Paris to register a loan, 110; urges calling of a meeting of the Notables, 110; joins in public demand for calling of a meeting of the States General, 111; resigns, 111; controversy with Necker, 191
Calvin, 23
Cambacérès, 244
Cambon, 392
Capitaineries, 41
Carlyle describes Marquis de Mirabeau, 147; 423

Catharine II., 359
"Cavern of Cannibals," 397
Cazalès, 293
Cerutti delivers eulogy at funeral of Mirabeau, 415
Chabris, Madame de, 426
Champcenetz, M. de, 454
Chapelier, 372, 403
Charles I. of England, 256
Chatham, 433
Choiseul suggests reform to Louis XV., 79
Choquard, master of school to which Mirabeau was sent, 151, 153, 154
Church, rapacity of the, 35
Cicero, 431, 432, 435
Claviere, 285, 369, 392
Clootz, Jean Baptiste, 377
Clovis, 16
Compte Rendu, 107.
Condition of peasants, 37
Condorcet, 106
Confiscation of church property, 367
Conflict between Church and State, 18, 19, 20
Conti, Prince de, 152
Corvée, or statute labor, 42
Coulon, Mademoiselle, 420
Covet, Marie Amelie de, 155
Cromwell, 255

D

D'Alembert, 76
Dante, 133
Danton, 14, 122, 263, 393, 422, 454
Dauphin, death of the, 235
Declaration of Rights, 285
De Launay, governor of the Bastile, 270, 271
Demarest, minister to Louis XIV., proposes creation of new offices, 36
Demosthenes, 302, 431, 432, 435
Descartes, 416
Desmoulins, Camille, 14, 122, 260, 308, 351, 390, 396, 406, 407, 411, 414, 454

De Thou on massacre of the St. Bartholomew, 29
Diderot, 76
Double representation for Third Estate, 203, 417, 418, 421, 426, 429, 430, 431, 432, 454, 455, 458
DuBarry, mistress of Louis XV., 73, 74
Dubois, Cardinal, 34
Ducos, 244
Dumont, 184, 226, 238, 239, 240, 256, 288, 301, 302, 353, 396
Dumouriez, General, 326
Duport, 405, 406
Duquesnoy, Adam, opinions of Mirabeau, 291
Duroverai, M., 224, 226, 285

E

Edict of Nantes, 27
Eglantine, Fabre d', 419
Elizabeth, Princess, 14
Elizabeth, Queen of England, law in retaliation of papal bull, 23
Elliot, Lady, 457
Emigration of King's aunts, 401
Etats Généraux, published by Mirabeau, 219

F

Favras, Marquis de, 361
Fersen, Count, 350
Festival of the Federation, 376
Feudalism, burdens of, 35
Flesselles, 269
Fonqueux, M. de, named minister, 112
Fontanges, Madame de, extravagance of, 36
Fontanges, M. de, Archbishop of Narbonne, 352
Foulon, 259
Fox, 431, 433
France, kingdom of many little kingdoms, 17
François, murder of, 328
Franklin, Benjamin, 95; his writings translated into French, 96; his influence in France, 97; his death in 1790, 97; Mirabeau pronounces eulogy in the National Assembly, 97; 232

Franks, under Clovis, lay foundations of French monarchy, 16
Frochot, 412
Froment, 281
Fronde, civil wars of the, 17

G

Gabelle, or salt tax, 44, 45, 46, 364
Galileo, 22
Gamaches, M., 436
Game laws, 40
Gauls conquered by the Franks, 16
George of Hesse-Cassel, Prince, 420
Girondins, 14, 262
Gossec, composer of the music for the mass at the funeral of Mirabeau, 415
Greville, Lord, 364
Guizot, 392

H

Hazlitt, 459
Hébert, 14
Helvetius, 76
Henry IV., 27, 297
Henry IV. of Germany, 20
Henry II. of England, 20
Hugo, Victor, 30, 165, 429, 438, 466
Huguenots, 29

I

Innocent III. preaches crusade against Albigenses, 21
Inquisition, Tribunal of, 21

J

Jacobins, 407, 414, 458, 462
Jacquerie, The, 38
Jefferson, Thomas, 241, 286
Jesuits and Jansenists, controversy between, 32
Johnson, 183

Judges of the Inquisition, 22
June 20, 1790, 376
July 14, 1789, 270, 271

L

La Bruyere, description of peasants by, 37
La Fayette, Marquis de, 266, 268, 316, 318, 320, 321, 328, 329, 333, 343, 345, 346, 348, 351, 361, 376, 382, 383, 387, 406, 423, 460
La Marck, 308, 309, 310, 334, 336, 338, 344, 351, 354, 356, 410, 412, 426, 453, 456
Lamartine, 133, 233
Lamballe, Princess, 14
Lambesc, Madame, 454
Lambesc, Prince de, 264, 274, 277
Lameth, Charles, 407, 411, 414
Lameths, The, 207, 407
Lanjuinais, 330
Law Courts, "partial, venal, infamous," 47
Law, John, 369
Lawyers, 75
Lavalette, 329
La Valliere, 65
Le Fevre, Abbé, 314
Legrand, 237
Leicester, Earl of, leads crusade against the Albigenses, 21
Le Jay, Madame, 181
Lenoir, M., 167, 174, 207
Lettres de Cachet, 170, 171, 172
Lewes, George Henry, 233
L'Hopital, 104
Liancourt, Duke de, 274
Lomenie, Charles de, 188
Lomenie, Louis de, 168, 188
Lords, kings in little kingdoms, 38
Louis IX., 297
Louis XII., 297
Louis XIV. stays progress of reformation in France, 27; subdues nobility and clergy, 28; abolished municipal elections in 1692, 36; power and glory of his reign, 55; flunkey-

ism, 56; etiquette of the court, 56; making of the king's toilet, 57, 58, 59; absolutism, 62; extravagance, 62; his mistresses, 65; makes war against the Netherlands, 66; amusements of the court, 67; political and financial condition of the country, 68; appeal of the villagers of Champagne, 68, 69, 70; death and burial of the king, 70
Louis XV., his pleasures, 72; his extravagance, 73; his mistresses, 74; his death, 194
Louis XVI., ascends the throne, 78; Talleyrand on his coronation, 77, 78; "reform of the mouth," 80; condition of commerce and manufactures, 80; manner, habits, and amusements of the king, 82; his weakness and vacillation, 82; arouses despair in the heart of Louis XV., 83; names Turgot minister, 104; reforms, 105; dismisses Turgot, 105; meeting of the States General, 115; orders the Third Estate to disperse, 253; Mirabeau defies the king through his messenger, 253; mobilizes troops at Versailles, 258; appoints a new ministry, 259; hears of the capture of the Bastile, 274; enters the Assembly, 276; promises to dismiss the ministers and recall Necker, 276; promises to visit Paris, 276; goes to Paris on the 17th of July, 276; met at the gates of the city by Bailly, the Mayor, 276; returns to Versailles, 277; first exodus of the nobles, 277; Necker returns, 280; banquet of the guards, 311; events of the 5th and 6th of October, 319; goes with his family to Paris, 319; establishes his court in the Tuileries, 323
Loustallot, editor of the *Revolutions de Paris*, 390
Louvet on Paris, 50, 207
Luther, 23

M

Mably, 76
Macaulay on Louis XIV., 61; 183; on Dumont, 187
Maintenon, Madame de, 65
Malesherbes on Turgot, 104
Mallebranche, 192
Malouet, 121, 192, 240
Malseigne, Chevalier Guiot de, 387
Mancini, Marie di, 65
Mandat, The, 371
Manuel, M., 167

Marat, 122, 390, 391, 393, 414, 416, 419, 454, 455
Marie Antoinette, 14; making of toilet, 61; her part in bringing on the Revolution, 83; her charm and beauty, 84; Arthur Young, Goethe, Madame Campan, Edmund Burke, and Madame le Brun describe her, 84; her manner, character, and conduct, 85; given to coquetry, 87; diamond necklace, 87; her amusements and diversions, 88; dubbed the "hated Austrian," 89; accused of the vilest crimes, 91; must be judged by her times, temptations, and surroundings, 93; pays a visit with her friend, Madame de Polignac, to the troops carousing in the Orangerie, 273; opposes Mirabeau in his ambition to reach the ministry, 309; banquet of the Guards, 312; enters the supper-room with the king carrying in her arms the dauphin, 312; the mob of women reaches Versailles on the 5th of October, 315, 316; mob attacks the palace, 317; queen flees to the apartments of the king, 318; La Fayette arrives, the troops drive the mob out of the palace, 318; she appears on the balcony and faces the mob, 318, 319; goes with the king to Paris, 319; the royal family take up their abode at the Tuileries, 323; queen has an interview with Mirabeau at St. Cloud, 341
Maria Theresa, 89; her daughters, 89
Marseilles, 195, 196
Massillon, description of peasants, 37
Maury, Abbé, 293, 369, 373, 422
Mauvillon, 308, 423
Mazarin, 171
Men of wealth of the middle class, 52, 53, 74
Mercier on Paris, 50
Mericourt, Theroigne de, 207
Michelet on Voltaire and Rousseau, 76; 232, 247, 250; on Desmoulins, 262; 379, 400
Mignet, 131, 267
Miles, A. W., 407, 408, 409
Minto, Lord, 152, 457
Mirabeau, Barrel, 427
Mirabeaus, The, 132, 133; their origin, 133, 134, 135
Mirabeau, Bruno di Riquetti, chastises usher of the royal household, 137; salutes statue of Henry IV., 138

Mirabeau, Jean Antoine, 138; "right arm of the Duke of Vendome," 138; his character, 138; presented by Vendome to Louis XIV., 138; wounded at Cassano, left on the field supposed to be dead, 139; marries Françoise Castellane Norante, 140

Mirabeau, Chevalier de (le bailli), 136; letter from Victor, 146; 154, 164; describes eloquence of Mirabeau at trial at Aix, 178

Mirabeau, Victor Riquetti, Marquis de, father of the great tribune, 140; at thirteen enters the army, 141; sent to a military school in Paris, 141; falls in love with an actress, 142; his father sends him forthwith to the army, 142; marries Genevieve de Vassan, 143; separates from his wife, 144; installs a mistress in his home, 144; author of distinction on social and political subjects, 144; quarrels with his son Honoré, 153; sends him to the Isle of Rhé under a lettre de cachet, 153; imprisons his son in the Chateau d'If, 157; has him transferred to the fortress of Joux, 157; after Honoré escapes from this prison, follows him to Holland, has him arrested and sent to Vincennes, 163; reconciliation, 176

Mirabeau, Marquise de, her marriage, 143; separation, 144

Mirabeau, Honoré Gabriel Riquetti, Comte de, his reply to Roederer, 31; pronounces eulogy on Benjamin Franklin in National Assembly, 97; urges the calling of the States General, 124; his appearance, 125; Madame de Staël describes him, 125; impression he created, 126; "Behold the victim already adorned," 127; Carlyle on his genius, 131; Mignet's description, 131, 132; his birth, 149; attacked by smallpox, 150; placed under care of a tutor, M. Poisson, 150; sent to school in Paris, 151; not allowed to bear his family name, 152; secured commission in the army, 153; love affair, 153; flees to Paris, 153; arrested under a lettre de cachet and imprisoned on the Isle de Rhé, 153; sails to Corsica, 154; wild life in Paris, 155; marries daughter of Marquis de Marignane, 156; his extravagance involves him in debt and he is confined under a lettre de cachet within the limits of Manosque, 156; his wife corresponds with Chevalier Gassaud, 157; duel threatened, 157; quarrel with Baron Villeneuve Moans, 157; arrested under

lettre de cachet and imprisoned in the Chateau d'If, 157; transferred to the fortress of Joux, 157; meets Sophie de Monnier at Pontarlier, 157; seduction of Sophie, 160; flight of the lovers to Holland, 161; they are arrested and separated, 162; Mirabeau sent to Vincennes and Sophie to a house of correction in Paris, 163; he is released, 164; his work on lettres de cachet, 170; reconciliation with his father, 176; stands trial at Pontarlier for seduction of Sophie, 176; argues his own case and is successful, 177; meets Madame de Nehra, 180; his industry, 182; meets Romilly, 184; his relations with Dumont, 184; seeks to be elected by the Noblesse a deputy to the States General, 195; rejected by the Noblesse, 195; stands as deputy for Third Estate in towns of Marseilles and Aix, 195; his campaign, 195, 196; addresses rioters at Marseilles, 196; arraigns the nobility, 199, 200, 201, 202; decides to stand for Aix, 204; first sessions of the States General, 212; king's council attempts to suppress Mirabeau's paper, 219; defends Duroverai in the Assembly, 223; advocates "Representatives of the French People" as the title for the Assembly, 237; defies the king's command to the Assembly to separate, 253; denounces the feasting in the Orangerie, 275; appointed on committee to draft Declaration of Rights, 285; moves that the Assembly issue an address to the people counseling moderation, 295; supports measure of Necker in favor of 25 per cent. income tax, 301; schemes for portfolio, 309; suspected of inciting mob on the 5th and 6th of October, 324; fully exonerated after investigation, 324; speaks against amendment of M. Blin, 330; pensioned, 337; interview with the queen, 341; makes overtures to Necker and La Fayette, 345; advises king and queen, 348; serves two masters, Royalty and Revolution, 349; lives extravagantly, 351; was he venal? 353; the Favras affair, 362; his connection with it, 363; confiscation of church property, 367; opposes new elections in the district, 374; favors motion of St. Etienne, 393; Robespierre opposes motion at the Jacobins, 394; elected president of the National Assembly, 395; address to Quakers, 397; opposes law against emigration, 403; assails Barnave, Duport, the Lameths, and their followers,

405; attacked at the evening meeting of the Jacobins, 406; closing days, 410; his death, 413; his funeral, 415; poisoning suspected, 417; post-mortem, 417; compared with his contemporaries, 422; statesman, politician, author, 424; his character to be judged by his surroundings, 426; orator, 428; his voice, 429; personal appearance, 430; compared with the world's great orators, 432; his repartee, 436; man of letters, 437; letter to King of Prussia, 439; his literary works, 445; religious views, 447; letter to Wilberforce, 448; his vices and virtues, 453; forgiving in disposition, 454; beloved by his servants, 455; style of dress, 456; his prodigality, 457; love of music and flowers, 457; his vanity and egotism, 457; could he have stayed the Revolution? 458

Molé, 303

Molleville, Bertrand de, paints disorder in Paris, 268

Monnier, M. de, 160, 166, 427

Monnier, Sophie de, 157, 160, 165, 166; her death, 167; 168, 169, 170

Monpezat, 146

Monsieur, 338, 354

Montespan, Madame de, 65

Montigny, M. Lucas, 188

Montmorency, Duke de, 376

Montmorin, Madame de, 123

Morris, Gouverneur, 208, 321, 453

Mounier, 121, 220, 237, 240, 285, 315, 316, 324

Mc

McCarthy, Justin H., 189, 190, 346, 353, 355, 407, 465

N

Napoleon, 131, 233, 244, 255, 279, 422

National Assembly, commons declare themselves the, 221

Necker appointed minister, 107; *compte rendu*, 107; his deposition, 108; his recall, 113; 191, 203, 246, 254; is summarily dismissed, quits France, 259, 260, 266; returns in triumph, 280; demands universal amnesty, 281; proposes

income tax of 25 per cent., 301; his measure supported by Mirabeau, 301; 333, 334, 335, 345, 361, 364, 390, 391, 392, 393, 460
Nobility, The new, 52, 53

O

O'Connell, Daniel, 434
October 5th and 6th, 314, 315, 316, 317, 323, 324, 325
Oelsner, 408
Offices, creation of public, 36
Orangerie, festival in the, 273
Orleans, Duke d', 14, 208, 264, 308, 323, 325, 460

P

Palais Royal, 257, 260, 311, 313, 426
Paris, Jansenism in, 33; Louvet's description, 50; Mercier's description, 50; Arthur Young describes scenes, 50; 205, 211, 267, 313
Paupers, 48
Peasants, burdens imposed upon the, 42; humiliating feudal services, 43
Penn, William, 26
Peter the Hermit, 435
Pétion, 313, 330, 419
"Petit Schönbrunn," nickname for Trianon, 89
"Petit Vienne," nickname for Trianon, 89
Philip II. of Spain, edict against heretics, 23
Philosophers, their influence, 76
Pitt, William, 431, 449
Polignac, Madame de, 273; abandons the queen, 277
Pompadour, Madame de, her extravagance, 36; mistress of Louis XV., 73
Pontarlier, 157, 176
Portalis, 177
Provence, Count of, 348, 361, 364

Q

Quesnay, physician to Louis XV., his remark to Madame du Hausset, 63
Quesnay, François de, 144

R

Rancourt, M. de, 165
Raynal, 76
Reb, Count de, 335
Reformation, The, 27
Richelieu made crown absolute, 17; suppressed public offices, 36; 171, 214
Riquetti, Thomas, entertains Louis XIV. in his house at Marseilles, 136; his son Honoré created Marquis de Mirabeau in 1685, 136
Rivarol, 288, 354
Robespierre, 14, 122; replies to Archbishop of Aix, 227; character, 228; 262, 308, 393, 394, 414, 418, 419
Rocca, Count of, 179
Rochechouart, Count of, 362
Rochefoucauld, Duke de, 266
Roederer, 31
Rohan, Cardinal de, 34; connection with the affair of the diamond necklace, 87
Roman Church, its organization and power, 18
Romilly, 453
Rousseau, 76
Royal sitting, 246, 250

S

Salle des Menus, 249
Saint Priest, 322
Savoy, Duke of, 436
Scott, Sir Walter, 430, 459
Segur, Count de, 272
Servetus, 24
Shakespeare, 432
Siéyès, 76, 122, 236, 240, 241; sketch of, 242; 253, 257; opposes abolition of tithes, 289
Slave trade, 448; oration by Mirabeau on, 450
Soliers, Jean Baptiste l'Hermite de, 134
Sophie, letters to, 167, 168, 169, 170
Spinoza, 21
Staël, Madame de, 122, 350, 429
States General, 113; Versailles chosen as place of meeting, 114; opening ceremonies, May 4, 1789, 115

Sermon by Bishop of Nancy, 115; first session in the Salle des Menus, 117
Stein, Alfred, 189
Stephens, 392, 423
St. Bartholomew, massacre of, 275
St. Etienne, Rabaut, 121, 393
St. Huruge, Marquis de, 407
St. Just, 262
St. Lazare, monastery of, 267
St. Petersburg, rejoicing over fall of Bastile, 272

T

Talleyrand on the coronation of Louis XVI., 77; 244, 278, 279, 364, 367, 383, 412, 413
Talma, Madame, 207
Tennis Court, 247, 372
Tennis-Court oath, 248
Teutch, Mirabeau's valet, 455
Thevenard, M., 326
Thiers on Necker's speech, 123; 236, 284, 356, 417
Tocqueville on the old noblesse, 53
Tollendal, Lally, 397
Tonnerre, Clermont, 254, 274
Towns, conditions prevailing in, 49
Turgot, minister of Louis XVI., 104; his reforms, 105; his dismissal, 105; Condorcet and Voltaire regret dismissal, 106; succeeded by Necker, 107

V

Valfond, M., 436
Vauvenargues on Marquis Mirabeau, 147
Vergniaud, 31
Versailles, 67, 88; meeting of States General at, 115, 124, 258, 259, 265, 273, 295, 311, 313
Vienne, Archbishop of, 249, 266
Villeroi, Duke de, addresses Louis XV., 63
Vincennes, castle of, 427
Virieu, Count de, 266

AUG 11 1969

Volney, 396
Voltaire, 30, 76, 105
Von Holst, 79, 189, 190, 347, 353, 356, 459

W

Waterloo, 1, 278
Watson, 88; on Robespierre, 233
White Terror, 367
Wilberforce, 448
Wilkes, John, 184
Willert, 332, 459

Y

Young, Arthur, 47, 50, 240

Z

Zwingli, 23

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